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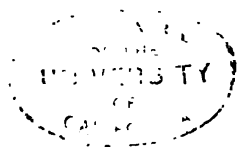


THE  
HISTORY OF THE NAVY  
DURING THE REBELLION.

BY  
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*ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS.*

VOLUME II.



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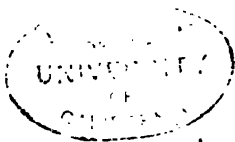
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# HISTORY OF THE NAVY

DURING THE GREAT REBELLION.



## CHAPTER I.

REVIEW OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE NAVY AND THE GENERAL PROGRESS OF THE WAR, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE CONFLICT TO THE FIGHT AT MEMPHIS, WHICH OPENED THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI TO VICKSBURG.

THE first volume of this history set forth the condition of the Navy when the war began, the work of preparation for the great conflict, the character of our ships, and particularly of our iron-clads and of our new American guns. The actual battle was also traced from the rescue of the old frigate *Constitution* at Annapolis, to the destruction of the rebel fleet at Memphis. This narrative covered a little more than a year of active operations.

Those in Europe who longed for and labored for the destruction of the republic, and those who sympathized with the rebels at home, sneered at what they called the weakness of the Government, and the inefficiency of the Army and Navy. They declared that no progress had been made toward subduing the South, and that the success of the North was evidently impossible. The real nature of the work done by the Navy was little known at home or abroad; and the outcry against its inactivity, and especially because the English cruisers were not immediately captured, was loud and bitter. The timid friends of the Government were oppressed with fears up to the time

when the brilliant operations on the Mississippi changed the current of public opinion.

Now, when the confusion of opinions and the passion of the strife are over; when the unreasonable expectations, and the equally groundless fears have passed away; when idle rumors and false reports have given place to truth, in the light of a calm judgment we see that the first year of the war was one of wonderful achievement, especially by the Navy. In this statement there is no disposition to withhold any praise from the Army. There is no wish to make a comparison between the two arms of war disadvantageous to either. The Army has not received, and never will, more honor than it deserves; and the country may be safely trusted to award due praise to the Navy when its work is fully known.

Little more than one year passed from the beginning of operations on the Potomac to the time when the Mississippi was recovered, all but the one obstruction at Vicksburg; and what was done from the opening of the war to the capture of Memphis may therefore be spoken of as the work of a single year. When hostilities began, the rebel batteries were established on the Potomac at Alexandria, in sight of Washington; and all below this point on that river, and all on the coast south of Fortress Monroe, was in the hands of the traitors, Key West and Fort Pickens alone excepted; for Sumter, beleaguered and defenceless as it was, even then was virtually theirs. From the mouth of the Ohio to the ocean, the Mississippi was closed by almost countless batteries and fortifications, and strong forts shut us out from the Tennessee and the Cumberland.

For what most in Europe and thousands here deemed the impossible task of reopening these rivers, and for guarding by blockade, and thus recovering, more than three thousand miles of coast and the forts, the Navy Department had at command the few vessels already mentioned in the opening chapters of the history, and a few batteries of serviceable modern guns.

Beginning with inadequate means, either for offensive or defensive war, the operations of little more than a single year show the following result. The blockade was established along more than three thousand miles of coast, and made so effectual

that even England, against her earnest desire, was compelled to acknowledge it valid ; and such was her surprise, that English writers have declared it the great fact of the American war.

In addition to this, the Potomac was delivered from rebel control ; the Hatteras forts had been taken, the inner fortifications of Albemarle and Pamlico were recovered, the Southern forts, except those at Wilmington and Charleston, were recaptured, Mobile and Charleston were sealed up, the navy-yard at Norfolk was again in our possession, the power of the rebel navy had been broken by the destruction of the Merrimack, New Orleans was captured, the Mississippi was reopened, and the Cumberland and the Tennessee were once more covered and guarded by the flag of the Union, and by means of these communications our army was advanced into the heart of Tennessee.

Where, in the history of war, have more extensive and important operations been crowded into the space of a single year ? Those who so thoughtlessly condemned the Government for what they called its weakness and want of success, either knew nothing of the facts, or misrepresented them in order to injure our cause. Englishmen in general, and indeed most in Europe, could form no just conception of the extent of the field over which the war extended ; and their estimate of our successes was graduated by their small and confused ideas of our territory, and moreover they judged and believed with the heart—a heart strongly enlisted against us.

Let Europeans compare the operations of England and France at Sevastopol with the results of the first year of our war ; let them remember that these nations had the two great navies of the world at their command from the very first, and we had almost literally nothing, and they will be ready, now that the prejudices of the strife are softened, to admit that this first year's work is one of the marvels of war. Let it be supposed that it had been said to the Navy Department in April, 1861 : " Here are four little vessels, carrying in all twenty-five guns, which are at your disposal on the Atlantic coast, between the Capes of Florida and New York ; in the Gulf of Mexico, at Pensacola and Vera Cruz, are eight more ships ; there are



three in the Mediterranean, seven on the coast of Africa, two on the coast of Brazil, three in the East Indies, and eight in the Pacific. These ships are partly armed with modern guns, and the rest of their batteries is composed of obsolete and comparatively useless cannon. You are required to take these vessels where they are, and as they are, and in twelve months you are expected to establish a blockade along more than three thousand miles of coast that shall defy the skill and capital of England. You must keep open the Potomac; you must capture the Hatteras forts and the fortifications on the sounds and rivers of North Carolina; you must take Forts Macon, Pulaski, the forts at Hilton Head, and Fort Clinch; you must recapture Forts Jackson and Philip, and regain New Orleans; you must open the Mississippi above as far as Vicksburg; you must burst open the gates of the Tennessee and the Cumberland, and maintain for our armies as they advance their lines of communication; you must contrive iron-clads that can cope with forts on the Western rivers, and an ocean iron-clad that can destroy the most formidable broadside frigate afloat." Who would not have said that such a demand was an absurdity, and that it was beyond the power of man to accomplish? This was actually done, with the aid of detachments of the Army where troops could coöperate; and yet there were thousands who were led to believe that the Navy Department was not managed with economy, efficiency, and skill.

The first year of the war, so far from being barren of results, actually settled the fate of the rebellion, and not one of its great successes but was gained by the Navy, or would have been impossible without its coöperation. When the blockade was successfully established, the Potomac made safe, the Mississippi opened, the Western army placed securely in the heart of Tennessee, and its lines of communication on the rivers had been made safe, and the seacoast forts, except at Charleston and Wilmington, had been regained, the rebellion had received its death-blow, whatever might be the danger from its dying struggles, or however they might be prolonged. When all this had been accomplished, McClellan was engaged with his magnificent army in besieging twelve thousand men at Yorktown. There was much severe fighting after this, and the war was

prolonged; but in May, 1862, the success of the enemy was no longer possible. The doom of the rebellion was sealed.

In carrying forward this history, it will be necessary to go back of the point to which the first volume reached, and touch upon some subjects which were temporarily passed over.

## CHAPTER II.

THE DECISIVE HOUR.—A SCENE WHICH DOES NOT APPEAR IN PUBLIC RECORDS.—THE POINT WHERE THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT WAS SETTLED.

MR. CARPENTER, in his admirable picture of the Signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, has presented, as most persons suppose, the great pivot-point of our national conflict. Doubtless this act stands alone and unapproachable in its moral grandeur, in its influence upon the subsequent part of the struggle, and upon the whole future of the nation. It will probably appear in history as the central fact of the war. Strictly speaking, however, this was not so much a true hinge-point where a decision was made between opposing policies, as a determination to do what had already been made inevitable. It had become a military necessity to emancipate the slaves; and grand as it was in its moral aspect, it was performed not so much from the pressure of moral obligation, as because without it success appeared impossible. It was a masterly move in the great game of the war, but it was not an occasion in which men acting under the inspiration of the loftiest motives decide upon a noble deed merely from their love of a righteous and noble act, but because preceding events had rendered it a necessity. It is not our intention to intimate that moral considerations had no weight with Mr. Lincoln in his decision; but perhaps these would not have been sufficient, without the pressure of circumstances, to have induced him to emancipate the slaves at that time. The signing of the Declaration of Independence was a real pivot-point in national history. It was a point where all the great motives for and against independence and freedom

were gathered up and weighed; where property, hope, life, and honor were all at stake; and where the existence of a nation depended upon the issue, involved as it was in the question of peace or war.

There was a corresponding time in the beginning of the rebellion, of which the world as yet knows little or nothing, an hour marked by no imposing external circumstances, in which, however, the question was virtually settled whether there should be on this continent one inseparable American nation, or two great fragments of a republic, themselves to be subdivided, falling apart like the bones of a skeleton in decay. It was the point where it was decided to assert and maintain at all hazards the national supremacy and the integrity of the Union, the point at which the new American nation began its life.

If Mr. Carpenter or some other competent artist will employ his pencil to illustrate the scene to which allusion is here made, it will live in history as the Second Declaration of Independence, by which it was decided that the republic should be preserved entire, with none of its power surrendered, and no foot of its territory wrenched away. It was the decision which involved the necessity of future emancipation, and wrought out our final deliverance from the insolent dictation and menaces of the South.

The prevailing spirit of the country during the first weeks of Mr. Lincoln's administration was exhibited by the action of the Peace Conference, which sat near the close of the Buchanan administration. Not only a strong desire, but the expectation of preserving peace, was cherished by most of our public men. They believed that war could be avoided by suitable conciliations and concessions, and the majority were prepared at that time, as it would seem, for compromises which, had the Southern seceders accepted them, might have been fatal to the country. There could not have been at that time, without the gift of prophecy, a clear view of the whole situation; and, consequently, no definite and adequate policy could thus be formed. Mr. Lincoln was unwilling to think that Virginia would secede if only moderate measures were adopted, while many believed that a peaceful separation should be submitted to rather than risk the chances and endure the horrors of a civil war. The

negotiations with the rebel commissioners, and the interference with the expedition for the relief of Sumter, seem to have originated in the mistaken idea that all would be peacefully settled if an immediate collision could be avoided.

In the mean time the rebels were swiftly maturing and pressing forward their plans; and the manner in which they soon struck, almost simultaneously, at important and widely separated points, shows the comprehensiveness of their scheme, and the unity and compactness of their organization.

By the middle of April their movements were such as to occasion the most serious apprehensions at Washington. Sumter had been assaulted and captured, Virginia was gathering troops around Norfolk, threatening both the navy-yard and Fortress Monroe; batteries were placed upon the Potomac, rebel troops (volunteers) were within reach of Washington on the west and southwest, a force was in the Shenandoah valley threatening Harper's Ferry, and Baltimore was as much in the hands of rebels as Richmond itself. Annapolis also was filled with a rebel population.

The critical situation of affairs will be understood if it is considered that the Gosport navy-yard was then perhaps the most important naval station in the country; that Fortress Monroe is the key to all the waters around the mouth of the Chesapeake; that Harper's Ferry was one of the most extensive manufactories and depots of arms in the United States, containing, besides arms on hand, the most valuable modern machinery; that the only road from the North to Washington runs through Baltimore, and that at Annapolis was the Naval Academy, with the school-ships moored in the harbor, among which was the frigate Constitution. There was almost literally nothing at the moment at the disposal of the Government for the defence of these vital strategic points. Fortress Monroe had only a fraction of a competent garrison, the navy-yard at Norfolk was without defenders and had no substantial defences, a few battalions only were at Washington, there was only a handful of soldiers at Harper's Ferry, and the school-boys were the only force at Annapolis for the defence of the academy and the ship.

On Sunday morning, April 21, 1861, the Secretary of the

Navy received a summons from the President before breakfast, requesting him to meet him immediately at the White House. When he reached the President's room he found several members of the Cabinet already there, and soon all were present except Mr. Blair, who was absent at his country-seat a few miles from the city.

The state of affairs on that morning was as follows: Fort Sumter had been captured; the Norfolk navy-yard, after having been partially destroyed, was abandoned, and had been seized by the rebels; the Government shops, machinery, and arms at Harper's Ferry were partly burned, and then left to fall into the hands of the rebels, who took immediate possession and transported the valuable machinery almost uninjured to Richmond; Baltimore was in the hands of the rebel mob that two days before had attacked the Massachusetts troops; bands of volunteers were gathered at Annapolis, threatening the Naval Academy, and endeavoring to capture the frigate Constitution; the railroad bridges north of Baltimore were destroyed, the telegraph wires were cut, or the stations in rebel hands; and, as before mentioned, batteries were planted on the Potomac almost within sight of Washington.

Such was the condition when Mr. Lincoln summoned his Cabinet on that Sunday morning, and, with the exception of the Massachusetts regiment which had been attacked in Baltimore, none of the seventy-five thousand troops called for by the proclamation of the President had then reached the city. When the members of the Cabinet arrived, they found with Mr. Lincoln a delegation from Baltimore, headed by the mayor, fresh from the scene where our soldiers had just been murdered by a mob; and they, with that sublimity of impudence which was the distinguishing mark of rebel character, and that is never associated either with true manliness or courage, *demanding* that no more troops should be sent through their city. The complete success of the rebels in their late movements caused them to feel that the Government was at their mercy, and that they had only to dictate the terms of submission. Confident, insolent, defiant, they told the President that they came to *forbid* him to send another company of soldiers through Baltimore.

Perhaps no event of the war shows more clearly, as we look

back on it now, the swelling arrogance, the self-conceit, bordering on insanity, manifested by the South previous to and in the early part of the war, than this mayor of this third-rate municipality, and a few private citizens, assuming toward the President of the United States the stage attitude of a master toward a slave, and pompously *commanding* him to send no more troops at his peril through Baltimore. There were Lincoln, Seward, Chase, Welles, Cameron, Smith—all Northern men. Was it wonderful that they met this extravagance of insult with some strong words? Was it any marvel that the Secretary of the Navy declared that he would not listen to such language as these revilers of the Government uttered, and left the house and went to his own office? Other members of the Cabinet left for the same reason, and went also to the Navy Department, and a meeting for consultation was held, at which, in addition to the Secretary of the Navy, the following members of the Cabinet were present: the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of the Interior, the Attorney-General having remained with the President, and the Postmaster-General having gone, as before mentioned, to his country-seat.

Thoroughly aroused by the scene at the White House, and fully awake to the perils that surrounded them, hemmed completely in by the contracting lines of treason, surrounded even in Washington by rebels and their friends, the President himself defied and insulted in his own house and in the presence of his Cabinet, these men saw that the crisis had come.

All peace conferences, all plans for conciliation, all propositions for peaceful separation or for delaying a collision, were brought to an issue then and there. Upon the temper and decisions of these men, in that hour, the question of peace or war, and the whole future of the country depended. With a solemn sense of responsibility, and with a just indignation at rebel audacity, they discussed the situation. They saw clearly that it had become a question of tame, disgraceful submission, or war with the whole power of the Government—war that at all hazards must be pressed to a decisive result. They saw that their country's honor could be saved by one course only, and they decided, so far as they could do it, to submit to no dic-

tation or demand of the rebels, and to accept war with whatever it might bring. That decision was the true hinge-point of the struggle, and there, on that Sabbath morning, it was virtually settled that there should be on this continent a free American nation. Before they left the room they decided upon some immediate measures coming appropriately within the sphere of their departments, especially upon the immediate purchase of as many ships as could be obtained. The chiefs of bureaus were summoned from church, and, as the telegraph was in the hands of the rebels, one of them was sent as a special messenger immediately North with dispatches, who, twenty-four hours after, was heard from at Wheeling, having found it impossible to pass the rebel lines on the eastern side of the mountains.

After this meeting was over, some of those who had been present returned to the White House. There they found Mr. Lincoln with General Scott again in consultation with the Baltimore delegation, and the Attorney-General in the same room, but sitting apart. Mr. Bates being asked the meaning of this, replied that the mayor and his companions had been down to the railroad depot, and having learned that other troops were on their way from the North, had returned and had addressed the President with language more violent and insolent than before. They declared that they would slaughter any Northern soldiers that should come to Baltimore, that the Yankees should not be permitted to pass through their city; and thus these petty officials supposed that they had effectually enjoined and bound the Government, and that Washington, cut off from Northern support, would fall an easy prey.

From that hour the great question was settled, and war, with all its consequences, was rendered inevitable; the grand decisive historic point was reached and passed. What followed was simply the unavoidable result.



## CHAPTER III.

### SOME ADDITIONAL FACTS CONCERNING FORTS SUMTER AND PICKENS.

SINCE the chapters in regard to the relief of Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens were written, some statements have been made, under the name of "The Secret History of the Rebellion," which differ so widely from the actual facts as to require that the real history of those transactions should be more fully set forth than at first was considered necessary. The importance of the truth of history will in this case justify some repetition.

During the latter months of Mr. Buchanan's administration he and his Cabinet were greatly perplexed by the situation of Fort Sumter and Fort Pickens. Whether to relieve them, or surrender them, were questions which they seemed unable to decide. Some vessels-of-war had been sent to Pensacola, and early in April, 1861, the following ships were at that station: The Sabine frigate, mounting fifty-two guns; the St. Louis, carrying eighteen guns; the Wyandotte, steamer, with five guns; and the Brooklyn, steamer, twenty-two guns—in all ninety-seven guns.

The Brooklyn, with a detachment of troops intended to re-enforce Fort Pickens when it should be thought best, sailed from Fortress Monroe to join the Gulf squadron on the 9th of January, 1861. This squadron, carrying ninety-seven guns, with troops on board ready to be landed at any moment, was lying off Fort Pickens, when the State Department thought it so important that the Powhatan should go there, as to detach her secretly from the Sumter expedition, without even consulting the Secretary of the Navy.

In January an agreement, which Captain Adams refers to

as an armistice, was entered into between Secretary Toucey, Secretary Holt, and some of the rebel leaders, that the troops should not be landed except in certain contingencies. In March, General Scott, knowing nothing, as it seems, of the armistice, sent out a vessel with orders to land the troops from the Brooklyn and place them in the fort. This, Captain Adams of the Sabine declined to do, on the ground that the armistice of Mr. Buchanan was still in force, and could not be violated by the landing of the troops. He, however, dispatched a messenger with a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Welles, stating what he had done. This messenger, Lieutenant Washington Gwathey, reached Washington on the 6th of April, 1861, bringing the letter concealed in a belt, and immediately delivered it to the Secretary.

The promptness of the Navy Department is shown by the fact that on that very evening a special messenger, Lieutenant John L. Worden, as mentioned in the chapter on this point, was dispatched to Pensacola, with orders for Captain Adams to land the troops on board the Brooklyn immediately. Lieutenant Worden reached Pensacola on the 12th of April, and that night the troops were landed and the fort was thus relieved, not only before the Powhatan arrived, but before a single transport reached there belonging to the expedition of Mr. Seward. The fort was relieved by the Navy Department, and a single inquiry at that Department would have enabled the Secretary of State to see that no necessity whatever existed for any secret movement on his part in order to secure Fort Pickens. Certainly there was nothing whatever for which the Powhatan was needed. The Sabine frigate, the Brooklyn, one of our largest sloops, with a heavy battery, and the Wyandotte, were there to cover a landing. The transports sent out from New York did not sail in company with the Powhatan; and this vessel was like one wandered out of her sphere, with no special mission unless it was to keep clear of Fort Sumter. Whether this was the real and only purpose for which she was so secretly detached from the Fort Sumter expedition may perhaps appear from the following facts:

As stated in the first volume, after much consultation Mr. Lincoln determined that Fort Sumter should be relieved, or that

at least an attempt should be made, and the Secretary of the Navy was to prepare the vessels. An order was sent to Commodore Foote to prepare the Powhatan at once for sea, as she was the only vessel at command whose size and battery would answer the purpose. Captain Fox was sent to New York to make the needed preparations, and the fleet was soon ready.

On the evening of the day when the Powhatan sailed, the Secretary of State called on the Secretary of the Navy at Willard's at about 11 o'clock P. M., and said to him that there was some trouble in New York about the Powhatan. Mr. Welles asked what trouble there could be about her. Mr. Seward stated that there was some clashing about orders. Mr. Welles replied that he did not see how that could be, as the Powhatan had clear and specific orders from him, and he did not understand what orders could interfere with his, or who had any thing to do with one of his vessels. He was then given to understand that the President had ordered the Powhatan to Fort Pickens, and Mr. Seward suggested that they should go together and have an interview with the President.

When they reached the President, and the matter was explained, he at once disclaimed all idea of interfering in any manner with the expedition to Fort Sumter, and declared that the orders of the Secretary of the Navy must not be interfered with. He said he could not remember the *names* of vessels ordered to different places, that he signed orders, relying upon those who prepared them, and asked Mr. Welles if he was certain that the Powhatan was included in the Fort Sumter expedition. Although it was then nearly 12 o'clock, the Secretary of the Navy went to his office and brought the original order. The President then said to Mr. Seward that he must telegraph instantly to New York and have the Powhatan restored to her original destination. Mr. Seward replied that it was so late it was doubtful whether it could be done that night. But the President peremptorily insisted that it should be done. The result was that a telegram was sent that night to Commodore Foote at Brooklyn, who sent it by a fast tug that overtook the Powhatan in the bay, ordering Lieutenant Porter to deliver the Powhatan to Captain Mercer, under whom she had been fitted out for Sumter. The telegram, instead of bearing the Presi-

dent's signature, or indicating that it was by the order of the President, as it should have done, was simply signed "Seward," and of course Lieutenant Porter disregarded it, because he had the previous order of the President himself to take command of the vessel—that order which, General Meigs states in his letter, was "*extracted*" from the President, which Mr. Lincoln declared was given with no thought that it would detach any vessel from the Fort Sumter expedition. The President's direction to the Secretary of State was of course to telegraph an order in his (the President's) name to restore the Powhatan to Captain Mercer, because nothing but that would avail. The dispatch in Mr. Seward's name did not carry with it the President's authority, and therefore it was not heeded and the Powhatan went on to Fort Pickens. When all the important known facts in regard to this matter are collected and arranged in their proper order, they appear as follows :

The rebel commissioners claim that they received through the State Department (unofficially) positive assurances that Fort Sumter should not be reënforced, but should be evacuated. They declare that when they heard that preparations were being made to send out an expedition to relieve the fort, they inquired of Mr. Seward what it meant, and that they received the reply, "Faith kept in regard to Sumter—wait and see." The commissioners seem to have understood this to be a promise that the fort should not be relieved, notwithstanding the preparations which were going forward. Whatever the intention may have been, the facts show that the only thing which could secure the failure of the plan to relieve Sumter was actually done. By an order from the President, whose real import he did not understand, the only vessel capable of performing the main service was secretly detached and sent to Fort Pickens, where she was not needed, and where she arrived only to find that the fort had been relieved before she reached the place, by the foresight and energy of the Navy Department.

The following dates, copied from the log-books of the Sabine and Powhatan, show beyond all dispute the true order of events :

At 12 M., April 12, 1861, the Wyandotte came alongside of the Sabine, bringing a bearer of dispatches for Captain Adams.

This was the messenger of the Secretary of the Navy, Lieutenant John L. Worden.

April 12th, 9 P. M., states the log of the Sabine, hoisted out launches, and sent companies A, B, C, D, in charge of Lieutenant Lewis, to reënforce Fort Pickens.

On the 12th of April, then, the fort was reënforced by an order from the Navy Department. At this time where were the Powhatan and the other vessels of the State Department expedition? The log-book of the Powhatan shows that on the 17th of April, five days after the fort was reënforced, at 10.30 A. M., she made Pensacola lighthouse, and at 1.30 P. M. she anchored about one mile from Santa Rosa Island.

The Atlantic, one of the transports sent out with troops, reached Pensacola on the 16th of April, four days after the fort had been relieved by the troops from the Brooklyn, and soon after this the transport Illinois came in.

These facts might lead some to suppose that the expedition to Fort Pickens was projected not to relieve that fort, but to prevent the relief of Fort Sumter. If so, the meaning of the telegram, "Faith kept in regard to Sumter—wait and see," may perhaps more plainly appear.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DESTRUCTION OF THE NAVY-YARD AT NORFOLK.

WHEN Mr. Lincoln entered upon the duties of his office, the important navy-yard at Norfolk was still in the possession of the Government. All south of this point, Key West and Pickens alone excepted, had been seized by the rebels, the investment of Sumter being equivalent to its capture. The secession of Virginia was already determined upon; but the formal action was first delayed and then concealed, in order that the proposition for a decisive blow might be more securely made.

Washington and its communications, both by railroad and river, Harper's Ferry, Fortress Monroe, and our great naval depot at Norfolk, were alike threatened; and at first the Government had no means at its disposal by which either of these points could be made secure.

Great anxiety was felt with regard to the Norfolk navy-yard, both on account of the importance of its location and the large amount of property which at the time was collected there. The Navy Department had not at command men enough either to hold the yard against the rebel troops then gathering in Virginia, or to remove the vessels and other property to a place of safety. Application was more than once made to the War Department for troops, but none could be obtained. General Scott declared that Washington and Fortress Monroe must be held at all hazards, and that even for these purposes his force was then insufficient. He believed that the yard could not be permanently held, situated as it was in the enemy's country, and at a point where troops could be easily concentrated by the rebels by means of their railroads.

It is not necessary now to raise the question whether General Scott was right or wrong in his opinion; the important fact is, that the Navy Department had not means of its own to make the yard secure, and that General Scott had no troops which at that time he was willing to spare.

There is another important fact which must be considered, in order to form a correct judgment of the apparent hesitation and indecision which marked the first weeks of Mr. Lincoln's administration. Many, who then exerted a large influence upon the policy of the Government, believed that, by a prudent, conciliatory course, Virginia could be saved to the Union; and it was thought if the secession of this important State could be prevented, that the rebellion would be at once arrested. Mr. Lincoln was among those who held these opinions, and he felt bound therefore to avoid, as far as possible, any act which could be used by the secession party in Virginia to strengthen their cause, or by which the supposed friends of the Union might be embarrassed.

What representations were made to the President by the rebel leaders, or what influences were brought to bear upon him, will perhaps never be known; but the fact is, that until Sumter was fired upon, Mr. Lincoln did not entirely relinquish the hope that Virginia might be saved. The anxiety to have this hope realized, in order to save the country from the impending war, prevented for a time energetic and decisive action. Its influence was felt in every movement connected with the Norfolk navy-yard. As will be seen by the official papers presented in this chapter, the Navy Department took very early precautionary measures looking to the security of the station, but hesitation and indecision marked the conduct of the commander of the yard, and he seemed continually influenced by a desire to avoid any act by which Virginia might be offended. If, when about to take any decisive step, the younger officers suggested that it would be considered a hostile act by Virginia, it caused him to hesitate or change his plan; and by this lack of energy and fixedness of purpose, and this fear of driving Virginia out of the Union, the yard was finally lost.

If any are disposed to think that the caution of the Administration bordered on timidity, they should remember that the

rebellion, then exhibiting suddenly its great proportions and organized strength, confident, defiant, and backed by the clearly manifested sympathy of England and France, wore a very different aspect from what it now does, overborne and crushed; and it must not be forgotten that the tone even of Union men was not then very decided, while a great party at the North, watching keenly for an occasion against Mr. Lincoln and his friends, rendered it very important that the rebels should strike the first blow in the conflict.

A brief description of this naval station, and of the property which was there at the time of its destruction, will show its vast importance to the United States Government, and how much reason the rebels had to exult, when even in its half-ruined condition it fell into their hands.

The Norfolk navy-yard was by far the most extensive and valuable yard belonging to the United States. It was one of the oldest naval depots in the country, and had been greatly enlarged since its original establishment. At the time when it was abandoned it was about three-fourths of a mile long, and one-fourth of a mile wide. Connected with it was an extensive dry-dock built of granite, which, fortunately for the country, was not destroyed, though preparations for blowing it up were fully made. The train either went out of itself, or was extinguished by the rebels. The yard was fully occupied by the various shops and storehouses usually found at such establishments, and by dwelling-houses for the officers. There were two large shiphouses complete, and a third was being erected. There were barracks for the marines, a sail loft, riggers' loft, gunners' loft, numerous smiths' shops, carpenters' shops, timber-sheds, founderies, dispensary, saw-mill, boiler-shop, spar-house, and a large amount of tools and machinery. Great quantities of material, provisions and ammunition were also stored there. According to the report of the Senate committee of investigation, there were about two thousand pieces of artillery in the yard, but the greater proportion of them were of old patterns. Some two or three hundred of them, however, were Dahlgren guns, of which the rebels made use in the various batteries and fortifications of the Southern harbors, sounds, and rivers. The armaments of three line-of-battle ships, and of several frigates,



were included in this estimate. This report of the Senate committee was, however, far from correct, as will be hereafter shown.

There were lying at the yard when it was abandoned the following vessels: the new steam-frigate *Merrimack*, carrying forty guns, afterward so famous; the sloop-of-war *Germantown*, of twenty-two guns; the sloop-of-war *Plymouth*, of twenty-two guns; and the brig *Dolphin*, mounting four guns. These were all efficient vessels. There were also the following old ships: the *Pennsylvania*, the *Delaware*, and the *Columbus*, ships-of-the-line; and the frigates *United States*, *Raritan*, and *Columbia*, of fifty guns each. The unfinished ship-of-the-line *New York* was on the stocks in one of the shiphouses, and the sloop-of-war *Cumberland* was moored abreast of one of the shiphouses. This last-named vessel was removed.

The value of these vessels is estimated as follows by the experienced and reliable chief of the Bureau of Construction, John Lenthall: steamer *Merrimack*, \$600,000; ships-of-the-line *Pennsylvania*, \$275,000; *Columbus*, \$185,000; *Delaware*, \$65,000; *New York*, \$220,000; frigates *Raritan*, \$155,000; *Columbia*, \$130,000; *United States*, \$130,000; sloops-of-war *Plymouth*, \$140,000; *Germantown*, \$140,000; brig *Dolphin*, \$40,000. Total value, \$1,980,000.

The total value of property lost by this disaster was, according to estimates from the proper officers, \$9,700,181.93. If we add the rebel estimate of the land, \$288,000, the sum total of property lost will be \$9,988,181.93.

Well might the loss of this most important naval depot and nearly ten millions' worth of property be considered a very heavy blow to the Union cause just at the time when ships and naval stores were so much needed, and when the acquisition of the yard and what remained of the property was so valuable to the rebels. Early in April such was the condition of affairs, that great anxiety was felt in regard to the safety of the yard. It was well known that the rebels were making preparations for aggressive movements, and it was apprehended they would seize the yard on the first opportunity; and yet without troops the Navy Department could do very little for its protection. Commodore McCauley, who commanded the station, was surrounded

by young officers who were in full sympathy with the rebels, and whose purpose was to give him such advice and information as would prevent him both from taking any measures to defend the place, or to secure the property.

Exaggerated reports were constantly made of the threatening attitude of the people of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and statements were industriously spread abroad that large bodies of troops were being sent from the interior, who would make an immediate attack if any thing should be attempted in the way of defending the station or of removing the property. The Department was exceedingly anxious to get the Merrimack out and send her to a place of safety. Inquiry was made of Commodore McCauley in regard to the condition of the frigate, and how long a time would be required to get her ready for sea. The Department was informed that it would take a month to put her machinery in working order. Not satisfied with this, the Secretary dispatched Chief Engineer B. F. Isherwood to make an examination for himself, and with orders to get the machinery ready as quickly as possible, in order that the vessel might be taken round to the Philadelphia navy-yard. At the same time Commander Alden was sent to bring the frigate round, Mr. Isherwood carried peremptory orders to Commodore McCauley to carry out the suggestions of the chief engineer with the utmost promptitude. Mr. Isherwood reached Norfolk on Sunday morning, April 14th, and, in company with Mr. Danby, chief engineer of the yard, made a careful survey of the vessel, and determined what should be done. The foremen of the different shops were then visited, and they were directed to engage all the workmen they could find and arrange them in double sets for working night and day. The machinery was very much out of repair. The work was commenced on Monday morning, and by working without intermission night and day, on the afternoon of Wednesday, April 17th, the engine was ready to receive steam, and this was reported to Commodore McCauley.

While the repairs were being made, Mr. Isherwood had engaged forty-four firemen and coal-heavers to carry the vessel round. Mr. Danby was on board as chief engineer, with three assistants; and coal and other stores were taken in sufficient to

enable the vessel to proceed to Philadelphia. All this had been done with the consent and assistance of Commodore McCauley, and Mr. Isherwood, as all was ready, requested from him as commander of the yard the order to fire up. The commodore replied that next morning would be in time. In order to seize the earliest moment that this order for delay would allow, the men and engineers on board the frigate were divided into regular watches, and at midnight the fires were started. Steam was soon raised, and the engines were worked at the dock and found to be in a condition to proceed at once to sea. About 9 o'clock on Thursday morning the report was made to Commodore McCauley that the vessel was ready to proceed, when he replied that he had not yet decided to send the steamer out. It was in vain that he was reminded of the peremptory nature of the order which Mr. Isherwood brought from the Secretary of the Navy, to get the frigate out at the earliest possible moment and send her to Philadelphia; he only replied that in the course of the day he would let his decision be known. He seemed to fear that obstructions had been placed in the channel. He was told by those who were well informed that the obstructions already there would be easily passed by the Merrimack, but that every night's delay would increase the danger. All this produced no effect. Early in the afternoon Mr. Isherwood again called upon Commodore McCauley, who then said he had decided to retain the frigate, and ordered the fires to be drawn. He was again reminded of the peremptory nature of the orders from the Navy Department, but it seemed to produce no impression upon him; he had determined to retain her, and thus the noble frigate was lost.

It seems very difficult to reconcile this conduct of Commodore McCauley with the idea that he was at that time a loyal man, anxious to defend his country's property and honor. It must be remembered that many men, whose perceptions became very clear and their convictions strong in the course of the war, were exceedingly confused at its beginning. The commander of this navy-yard seems to have been bewildered by the (to him) inexplicable condition of affairs. He was surrounded by younger officers who were in sympathy and leagued with the rebellion, and who seemed to have purposely misled him, ex-

aggrerating the dangers which surrounded him, and filling his mind with false alarms, in order that by his indecision and delay the capture of the yard might be rendered certain. Mortifying as such a conclusion may be, it seems the only alternative, unless it is admitted that he was in sympathy with the traitors. The valuable vessels might have been saved by promptness and decision on his part, even had it afterward been found necessary to abandon the yard. The following report of Commander Alden, who was sent to Norfolk to take the Merrimack round to Philadelphia, is inserted here, both because of its detailed narrative of events and because it places the conduct of Commodore McCauley in the most favorable light:

UNITED STATES STEAMER SOUTH CAROLINA, }  
GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON OFF BARATARIA, *November 30, 1861.* }

SIR: In accordance with the instructions of the Department, dated October 28th, and just received, I have the honor herewith to make the following report in regard to my "proceedings and observations in April last on special duty at and about the time of the destruction of the public property at Norfolk." On the 11th of April I received at the Navy Department in Washington two sets of orders: one, which was to go on file, simply ordering me to report to Commodore McCauley for temporary duty, and the other directing me to take the Merrimack to Philadelphia for repairs. This last order or private instructions were written by the chief clerk himself, and it was intended that no one else either about the Department or elsewhere should, on account of the excitement at Norfolk, know of their existence. Still, to my surprise, all Norfolk seemed full of it when I arrived there, and they had made up their minds to stop the ship, having already placed obstructions in the river, and set on foot other warlike preparations. Finding that my movements in the city were watched so closely, and the attitude of the people toward me so threatening, I destroyed my private instructions and took up my abode at the navy-yard to wait for the ship. On Thursday, the 18th, Mr. Isherwood reported that the Merrimack, so far as her machinery was concerned, was ready to start; he had steam up and the engines working at the wharf. I thereupon called upon Commodore McCauley and reported to him that the ship was ready, and that I only waited for his permission to take her. He hesitated at first; said he had not made up his mind about it; that he thought he should require her for the defence of the yard; he could put her guns on board of her, when she would be a formidable battery in any attack

that might be made. He thought, too, that the obstructions which had been placed in the river were enough to stop her. In reply to this last objection, I told him that Lieutenant Murray, first lieutenant of the Cumberland, had, at my request, examined the barrier and sounded the whole thing out that morning before daylight, and had found a place wide enough and deep enough to take the ship through. This seemed to make some impression upon the commodore; and then upon my appealing to him in the strongest terms to let me have the ship, and setting forth the peremptory nature of the orders of the Navy Department, he turned to Commodore Pendergrast and Captain Marston, of the Cumberland, who were present, and asked their advice in the matter, when it was decided that I might take the ship and make the attempt at least to get her out. Finding that she had no guns on board, I asked the Commodore for two field-pieces, which he told me to get from Commander Tucker, the ordnance officer of the yard; and there being no men, either on board of her or the receiving-ship, I asked Commodore Pendergrast for thirty, to be returned as soon as the Merrimack was anchored under the guns of Fortress Monroe, which he readily assented to. Captain Marston then left the office to get them ready. I soon after followed him to make my preparations for starting, and sent an order on board to be ready to cast off in two hours. So fully impressed was I, by the thickening atmosphere of treason around me, that nothing but prompt and immediate action would save even so much of that vast amount of property, that I instructed Lieutenant Alexander Murray, who had volunteered to accompany me as far as Fortress Monroe, to go on with his negotiations with a certain pilot for taking the ship out, authorizing him to offer one thousand dollars for the Merrimack, and twice that sum, together with a place in the Navy for life, if we succeeded in getting the Germantown out also. I then went in pursuit of the ordnance and executive officers of the yard. The first named threw all sorts of obstacles in the way of my getting the guns, and the other could not be found. The first lieutenant, in answer to my application to have the ship "winded" and "fasts singled"—as she was chained to the wharf with her *head up-stream*—said I must apply to Commander Robb, whom I soon after met coming out of the commandant's office with the intelligence that I *could not have the ship*; that the commodore had altered his mind and ordered the fires to be drawn. Unwilling to believe in the correctness of Commander Robb's statement, whose loyalty I had begun to doubt, I called upon the commodore again, and found it was too true. The fatal order had been given, which resulted in the loss to us of one of the finest ships in

the Navy. Finding that my mission was ended, I obtained leave from the commodore, and the same night proceeded to Baltimore, arriving early next morning (the 19th) at Washington, when I made a verbal report to you as well as to the Cabinet, which was then in session, and before which I was called, of all the facts of the case, which were substantially the same as are contained in this report.

I then received a verbal order to join the expedition which was at that time fitting out, and which left Washington the same evening in the Pawnee for Norfolk. Occupying a subordinate place in it, and presuming that the senior officers have made full and circumstantial reports of all that subsequently occurred, it will hardly be expected or necessary for me to go into particulars, and I therefore shall touch upon only one circumstance in that connection, which will be to show that Commodore McCauley was fully under the impression that we had gone there with our force to hold and protect the yard. With that comforting idea he had gone to rest with his brave little boy at his side for the first time after many sleepless and anxious nights; but when I called upon him after midnight to tell him that the time for his departure had come, that we were about to apply the torch to the yard, he was completely overcome with chagrin and mortification, and exceedingly adverse to leaving his post without first making some stand to defend the yard against any and all comers.

As the question, "Why didn't the commodore let you (me) have that ship?" has been so often asked, coupled always with an expression of the utmost confidence in his honor and patriotism, I must beg leave, although this report has assumed proportions much larger than I intended, to record my opinion of the influences at work in the commodore's mind. I believe, indeed I know, that the old hero, who has fought so well for his country, could have none but the best and purest motives in all he did, but he was surrounded by *masked traitors* whom he did not suspect, and in whose advice he thought there was safety. The cry, too, was raised and in everybody's mouth, officers and all, "If they move that ship, the Merrimack, it will bring on a collision with the people outside, who are all ready, if any thing of the kind is done, to take the yard." Besides, Commodore Paulding, whom I accompanied to Norfolk, expressed the idea that if we could not do any thing better, she (the Merrimack), with her guns on board, would make a good battery for the defence of the yard. This opinion influenced Commodore McCauley not a little. Again, seeing me alone and single-handed, with no pilot, even (the Governor of the State having forbidden their taking any man-of-war to sea), might he not be excused, under the cir-

cumstances, for doubting my power to carry that large ship safely through a narrow channel and across a barrier which those traitors had represented to him to be impassable ! His remark when he told me to take the ship, I am sure, will justify such a conclusion, although I am certain I could have gotten the ship out. He said, after hesitating some time, "Take her, and, if you can't get her out, *burn her*," showing that he had doubts of my ultimate success ; and knowing at the same time that if she once got beyond his reach, she would be lost to him as a defence for the yard ; and if I, in carrying out his instructions, got into trouble and found it necessary to burn her, she would be an entire loss to the Government.

In conclusion, I must not let the opportunity pass without bringing to your notice the services of Lieutenant Murray, of the Cumberland, who came forward with the utmost promptness and offered his aid in any manner in which it could be made available.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES ALDEN, *Commander U. S. Navy.*

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

In order that the course of the Navy Department in regard to this disaster may be fully understood, it is important to consider what measures were adopted by the Secretary for the security of the yard. To form a correct judgment of these, it is necessary to remember that the Navy Department had been unsuccessful in its efforts to induce General Scott to furnish troops to hold the yard. He gave two reasons for his refusal : one, that a sufficient force could not be spared for this purpose without endangering Washington or Fortress Monroe, or both ; and the other, that the yard could not be permanently held by any force then at his command. Nothing then remained for the Navy Department but to remove the vessels and stores if possible, and await the progress of events. The following documents will show the action of the Secretary :

[Private Orders.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *March 31, 1861.*

Commodore SAMUEL L. BREESE, *Navy-Yard, New York :*

SIR : You will be pleased to have in readiness for sea-service, without delay, two hundred and fifty seamen, ordinary seamen and landmen, to be transferred from the receiving-ship North Carolina to the receiving-ship Pennsylvania at Norfolk.

You will also detail the necessary officers to accompany them, to be furnished from the public stores with provisions, stores, etc., for the subsistence of both officers and men, and have them placed on board the chartered steamer.

Paymaster Henry Etting is authorized by the Department to charter a private steamer for their conveyance.

You will also transfer to the revenue cutter *Harriet Lane* fifty seamen, ordinary seamen, and landsmen, to be conveyed by that vessel to Norfolk. I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1861.*

Commander JAMES ALDEN, *Washington, D. C.:*

SIR: You are directed to report to Commodore McCauley, to take charge of the steam-frigate *Merrimack*, and deliver her over to the commanding officer of the Philadelphia station for the necessary repairs.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Memo.*—The enclosed orders are for Engineers Danby and Jordan at Norfolk, who are directed to report to Commodore McCauley, to accompany you, as also Engineers Newton and English, who have been ordered from this place; other assistance has been ordered from New York.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1861.*

SIR: You will be pleased to transfer to the receiving-ship at Norfolk, without delay, one hundred and eighty seamen, or seamen and landsmen, in the usual proportions, and twenty firemen and coal-heavers—two hundred altogether. If the requisite number are not on hand, let them be enlisted as soon as possible.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

Commodore S. L. BREESE, *commanding Navy-Yard, New York.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1861.*

SIR: Be pleased to have the *Water Witch* ready to proceed to sea on Tuesday next, the 16th instant. Further instructions as to her movements will be given by the Department.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

Capt. SAMUEL F. DU PONT, *commanding Navy-Yard, Philadelphia.*



NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1861.*

SIR: Be pleased to have the Merrimack prepared, in as short a time as possible, for temporary service. The commandant of the navy-yard, New York, has been directed to transfer to the receiving-ship at Norfolk, without delay, two hundred seamen, ordinary seamen, landsmen, firemen, and coal-heavers, for the purpose of making up a crew for the Merrimack. The Department desires you to inform it when it is probable the vessel will be ready.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

*Commodore CHARLES S. McCauley, commanding Navy-Yard,  
Norfolk, Va.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1861.*

SIR: Be pleased to have the Plymouth prepared immediately to be taken to Annapolis, Md., where she will be fitted up with especial reference to the accommodation of the acting midshipmen who will embark on the usual summer cruise.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

*Commodore CHARLES S. McCauley, commanding Navy-Yard,  
Norfolk, Va.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 24, 1861.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the accompanying report and copies of orders issued by me during my absence under your order of April 19th.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. PAULDING, *Captain.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington.*

WASHINGTON, D. C., *April 23, 1861.*

SIR: In obedience to your order of the 19th instant, I embarked in the steamer Pawnee, and with one hundred marines, sent on board from headquarters, arrived on the afternoon of the following day at Fortress Monroe.

Captain Wright, of the Engineer Corps, sent under orders from General Scott, waited upon Colonel Dimmick, and obtained the services of Colonel Wardruth's regiment of Massachusetts volunteers, and at 8 p. m. we were at the Gosport navy-yard.

As soon as I communicated with Flag-Officer McCauley, I ascer-

tained that all the officers in public employment here, being Southern men, had tendered their resignation and abandoned their duty. The workmen, on the preceding day, had absented themselves from the usual muster, and such people as came into the yard clandestinely possessed themselves of the arms belonging to the Government.

An angry feeling toward the Government was known to exist amongst the people of Portsmouth and Norfolk. Many were enrolled in military companies, and a force of some two or three thousand men were said to be assembled for the purpose of taking the navy-yard when their preparations were completed.

The powder of the Government had been taken from the magazine near Norfolk, and reports were circulated of batteries being established along the shore approaches to the navy-yard. At two different points, where the main channel is narrow, at Craney Island and Sewall's Point, numerous hulks and other obstructions were sunk, three of the light-boats having been used for that purpose, and the work was still going on, each day rendering the difficulty of the passage greater; the object being to prevent the men-of-war at the navy-yard from leaving the port.

The Merrimack steamer, of fifty guns, had been fully repaired, and, with the exception of her battery and storage of her hold, was ready to put to sea. When orders were given a few days previous to take her under the shears to put her guns on board, the order was countermanded, upon the representation of certain parties that such a proceeding would certainly bring on a collision with the people outside of the yard, and nothing further was done.

The sloop-of-war Germantown was alongside of the yard, completely equipped for sea, requiring nothing more than a crew.

The Plymouth sloop, also of twenty guns, was in a similar state of preparation, and a few hours would have placed the Dolphin in a condition to have gone to sea.

The guns in the yard and at St. Helena, with the exception of about two hundred, had been spiked, as well as all on board the ships, except five heavy guns on a side on board the Pennsylvania. The shells of these were drawn after my arrival, and they were also spiked.

The estimated number of ordnance of all calibres at this place is about three thousand, and of these some three hundred are the latest patterns of Dahlgren guns, some of large calibre. They could not be removed, and there was no effectual means of rendering the Dahlgren guns wholly unserviceable. One hundred men worked for an hour with sledge-hammers, and such was the tenacity of the iron that they did not succeed in breaking a single trunnion.

In carrying out the orders of the Department, it was my intention to have placed the vessels named in the channel to protect it from further obstruction, and, at my convenience, take them under the guns of Fortress Monroe, or send them to sea, as might be most expedient. Greatly to my regret, however, I found that these vessels had all been scuttled about two or three hours before my arrival, and were sinking so fast that they could not be saved.

In view of this condition of things, there were but two alternatives presented to my mind. The first, to leave the navy-yard and ships in the hands of people hostile to the Government, for it was apparent that the yard could not be held by our available means of defence, or, using the power with which I was invested, destroy the public property of every description. I was not long in adopting the latter expedient, and when all the arrangements were made and the tide served to remove the frigate *Cumberland*, I took her in tow, and when she was out of danger from the fire gave the concerted signal, and in a few minutes afterward the ships and buildings in the yard were in flames. Lieutenant Henry A. Wise was charged with burning the ships, and no officer could have performed the duty more efficiently.

The dry-dock was mined, and this duty was assigned to Captain Wright, of the engineers, and Commander Rodgers of the Navy. It is a source of deep regret to me that neither of these gentlemen reached the boat with which Captain Wilkes was charged to bring off the parties who were operating in the yard. Of this service Captain Wilkes had the superintendence. I trust that these gentlemen may have made their way into the country, and will thus escape. Both are men of distinguished merit, and it is much to be regretted that the Government should be deprived of their services even for a brief period. Having anchored the *Cumberland* above the barrier at Sewall's Point, the *Pawnee* proceeded to Fortress Monroe, where she landed Colonel Wardruth and his regiment. To him and his men my thanks are due for their manly and military bearing under circumstances of great discomfort, and doubt not that a just reliance may be placed upon their gallantry and patriotism. At Fortress Monroe I found the steamer *Keystone State*, of Philadelphia, in command of Lieutenant Maxwell Woodhull, who, in less than forty-eight hours from the date of his orders, had chartered, manned, and armed his vessel, and arrived at the point of his destination.

Without the aid of these powerful steamers we should have been greatly embarrassed, and the *Cumberland* placed in immediate peril.

Soon after my arrival at the navy-yard a flag of truce came from

General Taliaferro, commanding the military forces of Virginia. The purport of his message was, "that, to save the effusion of blood, the general would permit the Cumberland to leave the port unmolested, if the destruction of the public property should be discontinued." To this I responded, that any act of violence on their part would devolve upon them the consequences.

In coming out with the Cumberland she brought-up in crossing the wrecks off Sewall's Point, and hung for some hours, and was finally dragged off by the chartered tugs Yankee and Keystone State. I have instructed Flag-Officer Pendergrast to anchor in mid-channel off Fortress Monroe, until the pleasure of the Department shall be made known to him, believing it important to have a watch kept upon certain armed steamers said to have made their appearance in that vicinity. The Pawnee and Keystone State left Fortress Monroe at half-past 7 o'clock A. M. on the 22d, and arrived at the Washington navy-yard at about 2 o'clock P. M. this day.

The officers who served under my command, in the performance of the duty devolved upon me, have a claim upon the respectful consideration of the Government for the intelligence, energy, and patriotism with which they gave me their support and assistance.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

H. PAULDING,

*Commanding U. S. naval forces in the waters of Virginia, pro tem.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

From these official papers it may be seen how far Commodore Paulding merited the censure which he received from some quarters at the time. Perhaps, in justice to the Department, it should be stated, that when this officer was sent to Norfolk, on the 16th of April, it was expected that he would remain there instead of returning to Washington as he did; and had he done so, it is possible that he might have averted the disaster. But he doubtless acted in perfect good faith, and with the best interests of the country in view. The troops which at the last moment he was permitted by the War Department to take from Fortress Monroe, were merely some raw recruits who had never yet been drilled, and who had probably never heard the sound of an enemy's gun. They were doubtless, individually, brave men, but wholly unfitted then for actual service,

and, of course, little dependence could be placed upon them. Besides, General Scott would not consent that even these should remain for the defence of the yard. No regular troops were permitted to go; and with this little band of freshly recruited volunteers, his sailors and marines, Commodore Paulding went down to Norfolk to endeavor to save the ships and the yard. When he reached the navy-yard, he found that the vessels had been scuttled, some had already sunk, and the rest had so far settled that the leaks could not be stopped. He knew that the rebels were busy filling up the channel behind him, and the question was, whether he should remain until the Cumberland and the Pawnee should be shut in and these vessels be lost in addition to the rest, and that without saving the yard; or whether, inasmuch as he believed it impossible to retain possession of the yard for any considerable time, he should destroy what property he could, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the rebels, and take his own ships while the obstructions could yet be passed. He decided upon the latter course; and, great as the mortification was, it seems to have been a correct decision.

It was a calm and starlight night when it was determined to carry out the plan for the destruction of the vessels, and the buildings and property of the yard. The work of preparation was begun just before midnight on the 20th of April. The Merrimack was the first ship made ready for destruction. Combustible materials of all kinds that could be obtained, such as cordage, rope, ladders, gratings, hawsers, etc., were piled up before her mainmast, and were to reach across to one of the off-shore ports. On the top of this funeral pile were laid ropes of cotton-waste saturated with turpentine. The decks and beams were also flooded with turpentine, leaving the ends of the cotton-waste ropes outside the port, where they could be easily fired. In the same manner all the vessels at the yard were prepared for the great conflagration. The shiphouses and other buildings were also got ready. In the mean time about one hundred men were sent to the yard for the purpose of destroying the cannon, some of which had been previously spiked, though in an imperfect manner. The intention was to break off the trunnions with heavy sledges. This was easily done with many of

the old guns, but when they came to the new Dahlgren guns all their efforts were vain. Though they used sledges weighing eighteen pounds they could not break a single trunnion. Such was the tenacity and superior character of the metal that it was found impossible to mutilate them by any means then available, and therefore these beautiful guns were left uninjured for the rebels. This fact shows what an improvement had been made by that scientific and accomplished officer, Admiral Dahlgren, not alone in the form of our cannon, but in the metal from which they were cast.

At about half-past 2 o'clock a rocket was sent up from the Pawnee, giving the appointed signal for the firing of the trains. The work was begun with the Merrimack, and in a few seconds the fire swept over her whole vast frame, and from stem to stern she appeared one solid body of flame. Rapidly as it could be done the trains of the great ships were fired, and those of the immense shiphouses also, and in a few minutes land and water seemed one roaring, surging sea of fire. The Pawnee and Cumberland were under way to avoid the danger; the boats which had been left behind for kindling the fires glided rapidly away, and ten millions of property and the most valuable naval station of the United States were given up to the flames and the rebels. They immediately rushed into the yard to rescue what they could, and the dry-dock and some of the important workshops and dwellings of the officers were saved. The United States frigate was uninjured; and the Merrimack, though burned as far as she was above the water, was soon raised, to become for a time a terror to the country. It was a great disaster for the Government, and a signal triumph for the rebels.

Reference has been made to the inaccuracy of the report of the Senate committee in reference to the number of guns which were abandoned at the navy-yard. The statement was that there were at least two thousand cannon there, of which between two and three hundred were Dahlgren guns. The committee were evidently misled by the testimony. The witnesses gave the number, as it appeared to them, without an accurate count. The rebel authorities, elated as they were by their prize, would not be very much inclined to underrate its value in their official statements. An exact inventory was made of

every article found in the yard on the 21st of April, and the following is a copy of their statement of the guns :

1 11-inch Columbiad.	82 32-pounders, 33 cwt.
2 10-inch guns.	84 32-pounders, 33 "
52 9-inch guns.	44 32-pounders, 27 "
4 8-inch guns, 90 cwt.	1 boat and field howitzer, 1,200 lbs.
47 8-inch guns, 68 "	2 boat and field howitzers, 250 lbs.
27 8-inch guns, 55 "	235 61-cwt. guns (old style).
1 8-inch gun, 57 "	50 70-cwt. " "
4 64-pounders, 106 "	44 40-cwt. Shubrick guns.
225 32-pounders, 61 "	63 42-cwt. and 27-cwt. carronades.
173 32-pounders, 57 "	35 32-pounders, 32 cwt.
44 32-pounders, 51 "	
38 32-pounders, 46 "	1,198 guns of all kinds.

Of these, fifty-two only, the 9-inch guns, were Dahlgren guns. This is, in all probability, a correct account of the ordnance in the Norfolk navy-yard.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TRENT CASE.

ON the 8th of November, 1861, an event occurred on the steamer route between Havana and St. Thomas, which, more than any during the war, threatened to involve us in a foreign conflict. For a time it appeared impossible to escape a war with England, and perhaps with France also. J. M. Mason, of Virginia, author of the Fugitive-Slave Law, and John Slidell, both once United States Senators, and having deserted their seats in the Senate, violated the oaths they had taken, and engaged in the conspiracy for the overthrow of the Government they had sworn to cherish and protect, were clothed by the rebel chief with such powers as he could bestow, and sent out in the assumed capacity of foreign ministers, the one to England and the other to France. In this capacity, and with dispatches from the rebels to these governments, they left Charleston, and, escaping our cruisers, reached Havana, and there took passage on the English mail-steamer Trent, the captain of the steamer being fully aware of their names, character, and mission. This vessel was stopped on her passage to St. Thomas by the United States steamer San Jacinto, commanded by Captain Charles Wilkes, who brought the rebel ambassadors on board his own ship, and then permitted the Trent to proceed uninjured on her voyage. For this act Captain (now Rear-Admiral) Wilkes received the thanks of the Secretary of the Navy in the following letter :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *November 30, 1861.*

SIR: I congratulate you on your safe arrival, and especially do I congratulate you on the great public service you have rendered in the



capture of the rebel emissaries. Messrs. Mason and Slidell have been conspicuous in the conspiracy to dissolve the Union; and it is well known that when seized by you they were on a mission hostile to the Government and the country. Your conduct in seizing these public enemies was marked by intelligence, ability, decision, and firmness, and has the emphatic approval of this Department. It is not necessary that I should in this communication—which is intended to be one of congratulation to yourself, officers, and crew—express an opinion on the course pursued in omitting to capture the vessel which had these public enemies on board, further than to say that the forbearance exercised in this instance must not be permitted to constitute a precedent hereafter for infractions of neutral obligations.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES.

*Captain CHAS. WILKES, commanding U. S. Steamer San Jacinto,  
Boston, Mass.*

The House of Representatives, also approving his course, passed the following resolution in regard to it by a decided vote:

*Resolved, That the President of the United States be requested to present to Captain Charles Wilkes a gold medal, with suitable emblems and devices, in testimony of the high sense entertained by Congress of his good conduct in promptly arresting the rebel ambassadors, James M. Mason and John Slidell.*

This resolution was indefinitely postponed in the Senate, but it nevertheless expressed the real sentiments of the loyal people of the country.

In order that the facts in this important case may be officially presented, the main documents are here transcribed for the information of the reader:

UNITED STATES STEAMER SAN JACINTO, *November 15, 1861.*

SIR: I have written to you, relative to the movements of this ship, from Cienfuegos, on the south coast of Cuba. There I learned that Messrs. Slidell and Mason had landed on Cuba, and had reached the Havana from Charleston. I took in some sixty tons of coal and left with all dispatch on the 26th of October, to intercept the return of the *Theodora*; but on my arrival at the Havana, on the 31st, I found she

had departed on her return, and that Messrs. Slidell and Mason, with their secretaries and families, were there, and would depart on the 7th of the month in the English steamer Trent for St. Thomas, on their way to England.

I made up my mind to fill up with coal and leave the port as soon as possible, to await at a suitable position on the route of the steamer to St. Thomas, to intercept her and take them out.

On the afternoon of the 2d I left the Havana, in continuation of my cruise after the Sumter on the north side of Cuba. The next day, when about to board a French brig, she ran into us on the starboard side, at the mainchains, and carried away her bowsprit and foretopmast, and suffered other damages. I enclose you herewith the reports of the officers who witnessed the accident. I do not feel that any blame is due to the officer in charge of this ship at the time the ship was run into; and the brig was so close when it was seen she would probably do so, that even with the power of steam, lying motionless as we were, we could not avoid it—it seemed as if designed.

I at once took her in tow and put an officer on board with a party to repair her damages; this was effected before night, but I kept her in tow until we were up with the Havana, and ran within about eight miles of the light, the wind blowing directly fair for her to reach port.

I then went over to Key West, in hopes of finding the Powhatan or some other steamer to accompany me to the Bahama channel, to make it impossible for the steamer in which Messrs. Slidell and Mason were to embark to escape either in the night or day. The Powhatan had left but the day before, and I was therefore disappointed and obliged to rely upon the vigilance of the officers and crew of this ship, and proceeded the next morning to the north side of the Island of Cuba, communicated with the *Sagua la Grande* on the 4th, hoping to receive a telegraphic communication from Mr. Shufelt, our consul-general, giving me the time of the departure of the steamer.

In this also I was disappointed, and ran to the eastward some ninety miles, where the old Bahama channel contracts to the width of fifteen miles, some two hundred and forty miles from the Havana, and in sight of the Paredon del Grande lighthouse. There we cruised until the morning of the 8th, awaiting the steamer, believing that if she left at the usual time she must pass us about noon of the 8th, and we could not possibly miss her. At 11.40 A. M. on the 8th her smoke was first seen; at 12 M. our position was to the westward of the entrance into the narrowest part of the channel, and about nine miles northeast from the lighthouse of Paredon del Grande, the nearest point of Cuba to us.

We were all prepared for her, beat to quarters, and orders were given to Lieutenant D. M. Fairfax to have two boats manned and armed to board her, and make Messrs. Slidell, Mason, Eustis, and McFarland, prisoners, and send them immediately on board. (A copy of this order to him is herewith enclosed.) The steamer approached and hoisted English colors, our ensign was hoisted, and a shot was fired across her bow; she maintained her speed, and showed no disposition to heave-to; then a shell was fired across her bow, which brought her to. I hailed that I intended to send a boat on board, and Lieutenant Fairfax, with the second cutter of this ship, was dispatched. He met with some difficulty, and, remaining on board the steamer with a part of the boat's crew, sent her back to request more assistance; the captain of the steamer having declined to show his papers and passenger list, a force became necessary to search her. Lieutenant James A. Greer was at once dispatched in the third cutter, also manned and armed.

Messrs. Slidell, Mason, Eustis, and McFarland were recognized and told they were required to go on board this ship. This they objected to until an overpowering force compelled them; much persuasion was used and a little force, and at about 2 o'clock they were brought on board this ship and received by me. Two other boats were then sent to expedite the removal of their baggage and some stores, when the steamer, which proved to be the Trent, was suffered to proceed on her route to the eastward, and at 3.30 P. M. we bore away to the northward and westward. The whole time employed was two hours and thirteen minutes.

I enclose you the statements of such officers who boarded the Trent, relative to the facts, and also an extract from the log-book of this ship.

It was my determination to have taken possession of the Trent, and send her to Key West as a prize, for resisting the search and carrying these passengers, whose character and objects were well known to the captain; but the reduced number of my officers and crew, and the large number of passengers on board, bound to Europe, who would be put to great inconvenience, decided me to allow them to proceed.

Finding the families of Messrs. Slidell and Eustis on board, I tendered them the offer of my cabin for their accommodation to accompany their husbands; this they declined, however, and proceeded in the Trent.

Before closing this dispatch I would bring to your notice the notorious action of her British majesty's subjects, the consul-general of Cuba and those on board the Trent, in doing every thing to aid and abet the escape of these four persons, and endeavoring to conceal their

persons on board. No passports or papers of any description were in possession of them from the Federal Government; and for this and other reasons which will readily occur to you I made them my prisoners, and shall retain them on board here until I hear from you what disposition is to be made of them.

I cannot close this report without bearing testimony to the admirable manner in which all the officers and men of this ship performed their duties, and the cordial manner in which they carried out my orders. To Lieutenant Fairfax I beg leave to call your particular attention for the praiseworthy manner in which he executed the delicate duties with which he was intrusted; it met and has received my warmest thanks.

After leaving the north side of Cuba I ran through the Santaren passage and up the coast from off St. Augustine to Charleston, and regretted being too late to take a part in the expedition to Port Royal.

I enclose herewith a communication I received from Messrs. Slidell, Mason, Eustis, and McFarland, with my answer.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

CHARLES WILKES, *Captain.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

U. S. STEAMER SAN JACINTO, *at sea, November 9, 1861.*

SIR: We desire to communicate to you, by this memorandum, the facts attending our arrest yesterday on board the British mail-steamer Trent, by your order, and our transfer to this ship.

We, the undersigned, embarked at Havana on the 7th instant, as passengers on board the Trent, Captain Moir, bound to the island of St. Thomas, the Trent being one of the regular mail and passenger line of the British Royal Mail Steamship Company, running from Vera Cruz *via* Havana to St. Thomas, and thence to Southampton, England. We paid our passage-money for the whole route from Havana to Southampton to the British consul at Havana, who acts as the agent or representative of the said steamship company, Mr. Slidell being accompanied by his family, consisting of his wife, four children, and a servant, and Mr. Eustis by his wife and servants.

The Trent left the port of Havana about 8 o'clock A. M. on the morning of the 7th instant, and pursued her voyage uninterruptedly until intercepted by the United States steamer San Jacinto, under your command, on the day following (the 8th instant) in the manner now to be related.

When the San Jacinto was first observed several miles distant, the

Trent was pursuing the usual course of her voyage along the old Bahama or Nicholas channel; was about two hundred and forty miles from Havana, and in sight of the lighthouse of Paredon Grande, the San Jacinto then lying stationary, or nearly so, about the middle of the channel, and where it was some fifteen miles wide, as since shown us on the chart, the nationality of the ship being then unknown. When the Trent had approached near enough for her flag to be distinguished, it was hoisted at the peak and at the main, and so remained for a time. No flag was shown by the San Jacinto. When the Trent had approached within a mile of the San Jacinto, still pursuing the due course of her voyage, a shotted gun was fired from the latter ship across the course of the Trent, and the United States flag at the same time displayed at her peak. The British flag was again immediately hoisted, as before, by the Trent, and so remained. When the Trent had approached, still on her course, within from two to three hundreds yards of the San Jacinto, a second shotted gun was fired from your ship again across the course of the Trent. When the Trent got within hailing distance, her captain inquired what was wanted. The reply was understood to be they would send a boat, both ships being then stationary, with steam shut off. A boat very soon put off from your ship, followed immediately by two other boats, with full crews, and armed with muskets and side-arms. A lieutenant in the naval uniform of the United States, and with side-arms, boarded the Trent, and, in the presence of most of the passengers then assembled on the upper deck, said to Captain Moir that he came with orders to demand his passenger list. The captain refused to produce it, and formally protested against any right to visit his ship for the purpose indicated. After some conversation, importing renewed protests on the part of the captain against the alleged object of the visit, and on the part of the officer of the San Jacinto that he had only to execute his orders, the latter said that two gentlemen (naming Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason) were known to be on board, as also two other gentlemen (naming Mr. Eustis and Mr. McFarland), and that his orders were to take and carry them on board the San Jacinto. It should have been noted that on first addressing the captain the officer announced himself as a lieutenant of the United States steamer San Jacinto. The four gentlemen thus named being present, the lieutenant, addressing Mr. Slidell, and afterward Mr. Mason, repeated that his orders were to take them, together with Mr. Eustis and Mr. McFarland, and carry them on board his ship, which orders he must execute. Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason, in reply, protested, in the presence of the captain of the Trent, his officers and passengers, against such threatened violation of their per-

sons and of their rights, and informed the lieutenant that they would not leave the ship they were in unless compelled by the employment of actual force greater than they could resist, and Mr. Eustis and Mr. McFarland united with them in expressing a like purpose. That officer stated that he hoped he would not be compelled to resort to the use of force, but, if it should become necessary to employ it in order to execute his orders, he was prepared to do so. He was answered by the undersigned that they would submit to such force alone. The lieutenant then went to the gangway, where his boats were, the undersigned going at the same time to their state-rooms, on the deck next below, followed by Captain Moir and by the other passengers. The lieutenant returned with a party of his men, a portion of whom were armed with side-arms, and others, appearing to be a squad of marines, having muskets and bayonets. Mr. Slidell was at this time in his state-room, immediately by, and in full view. The lieutenant then said to Mr. Mason that, having his force now present, he hoped to be relieved from the necessity of calling it into actual use. That gentleman again answered that he would only submit to actual force greater than he could overcome, when the lieutenant and several of his men, by his order, took hold of him in a manner and in numbers sufficient to make resistance fruitless, and Mr. Slidell joining the group at the same time, one or more of the armed party took like hold of him, and those gentlemen at once went into the boat. During this scene many of the passengers became highly excited, and gave vent to the strongest expressions of indignation, seeming to indicate a purpose of resistance on their part, when the squad armed with muskets, with bayonets fixed, made sensible advance of one or two paces, with their arms at a charge. It must be added here, omitted in the course of the narration, that before the party left the upper deck an officer of the Trent, named Williams, in the naval uniform of Great Britain, and known to the passengers as having charge of the mails and accompanying them to England, said to the lieutenant that, as the only person present directly representing his Government, he felt called upon, in language as strong and as emphatic as he could express, to denounce the whole proceeding as a piratical act.

Mr. Slidell and Mr. Mason, together with Mr. Eustis and Mr. McFarland, against whom force in like manner had been used, were taken to the San Jacinto as soon as they entered the boat. When they reached your ship you received them near the gangway, announcing yourself as Captain Wilkes, the commander of the ship, and conducted them to your cabin, which you placed at their disposal. When the undersigned came on board they found the men at their quarters, and the

guns bearing on the Trent. After some time occupied in bringing on board our baggage and effects, the San Jacinto proceeded to the northward, through the Sautaren channel, the Trent having been detained from three to four hours.

The foregoing is believed to be a correct narrative in substance of the facts and circumstances attending our arrest and transfer from the British mail steamer to the ship under your command, and which we doubt not will be corroborated by the lieutenant present, as well as by all who witnessed them.

The incidents here given in detail may not have been witnessed by each one of the undersigned individually, but they were by one or more of them. As for the most part they did not pass under your notice, we have deemed it proper to present them in this form before you, expressing the wish that, if considered incorrect in any part, the inaccuracies may be pointed out.

With a respectful request that you will transmit a copy of this paper to the Government of the United States, together with your report of the transaction, to facilitate which a copy is herewith enclosed,

We have the honor to be, very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

JOHN SLIDELL,

GEORGE EUSTIS,

J. M. MASON,

J. E. McFARLAND.

*Captain WILKES, U. S. Navy, commanding San Jacinto.*

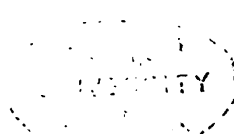
Such were the main facts in the affair which afterward became famous in Europe and America as the "Trent Case." Almost as simultaneously as the telegraph could flash the account over the kingdom, Great Britain blazed with excitement, and the real spirit of England was fully revealed. The feelings of hostility toward the North, which had been partially held in check for decency's sake, had now found an occasion and an excuse, if not a proper cause. It showed, in a manner that American statesmen would be wise to remember, even when it is forgiven, how, beneath all the friendly manifestations which lie on the surface, the old feeling of dislike and even animosity toward our country remains in the heart of England, so that a very slight cause will kindle it into a flame that will burn with all its former intensity of passion. England may respect us, may desire and seek our friendship; but while she remains as she now is, a country of *classes*, she cannot be a sincere and

hearty friend. From the fact that the officers of the British Government seemed quite willing, if not anxious, that the war spirit should be cherished among the people, it would appear that they at the first determined to seize the opportunity for war. The unexpected alacrity with which our Government humbled itself to accede to the haughty demands of England removed every pretext for hostilities, and she devoted herself, as before, to *neutral war*.

There is, it is believed, no room to doubt that Captain Wilkes, in seizing these conspicuous men, and the Secretary of the Navy in his letter of approval, and the House of Representatives in its vote of thanks, represented far more truly the real spirit and opinions of the American people than did the Senate by its course, or the Government by surrendering these chief instigators and promoters of rebellion. The excitement throughout the country was intense, and, at first, the idea of surrendering Slidell and Mason was almost universally scouted. But the Government evidently felt itself too weak to meet successfully both a civil and foreign war. It believed that it was absolutely necessary to yield to the arrogance of England in order to save the country; and the historians of the future will probably record that, for once at least, "The Republic" took counsel of its fears.

The exultation of the rebels was boundless. They did not even anticipate that Americans would bow to England; they knew well the temper of Britain, and believing, therefore, war to be inevitable, they regarded the North as already beaten, and their own independence and revenge secure.

Meanwhile, the Government undertook first to allay the general excitement, and then to defend itself for the surrender of the rebel envoys, already determined upon, by assuming that both the law of nations and the long-settled policy of the republic required us to repudiate the acts of Captain Wilkes, and restore his prisoners to the custody and protection of the British Government. By stating that our Government decided to do this, it is not intended to assert that all the departments of Government, and all the members of the Cabinet, approved of this course. The Secretary of the Navy did not modify his first opinions, nor change in any respect his position. Our Navy





has never consented that the country should be humbled at the feet of England. The House of Representatives, standing next to the people, expressed correctly the feelings of the popular heart.

If the surrender of these men was truly a measure of wise policy, and if it was really demanded by the previous course of our nation, then to Mr. Seward, probably more than to any other man, belongs the credit of adhering to justice and established principle, in opposition to the evident spirit of the people, and thus saving the country from what might have been a very disastrous war. If, on the other hand, it was a timid surrender of the national honor, then also the Secretary of State must be held mainly responsible; while, probably, the chief defence of the Government is found in the argument of Mr. Sumner in the United States Senate, January 9, 1862. Inasmuch as the deed was done, it was necessary to show, if possible, that the country had not been disgraced. The speech sustains the reputation of this accomplished statesman as a man of extensive learning and intellectual power; and if it appears more like the plea of a skilful advocate than of a massive argument built upon broad and acknowledged principles, it is not the fault of Mr. Sumner. The Government had decided that two of the most bitter and influential of its enemies, fairly captured, as most believe, should be given up to hostile and insulting England; and it was absolutely necessary that this act should be so defended that the people should not withdraw their confidence from Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet, and this task Mr. Sumner was expected to perform. No man in the country, probably, could have done it more successfully; and yet, when we consider the logical acumen of the Senator, it is not improbable that he was better satisfied with the effect of his argument than with the argument itself. The cause of complaint of the British Government was confined to a single point, which is thus clearly stated by Mr. Sumner himself, and so presented as to exclude entirely every other question from the case: "Thus it appears that the present complaint of the British Government is not founded on the assumption, by the American war-steamer, of the belligerent right of search; nor on the ground that this right was exercised on board a neutral vessel between two neutral ports; nor that it was exercised on board a mail-steamer

sustained by a subvention from the crown, and officered in part from the royal navy ; nor that it was exercised in a case where the penalties of contraband could not attach ; but it is founded simply and precisely on the idea that persons other than apparent officers in the military or naval service cannot be taken out of a neutral ship at the mere will of the officer who exercises the right of search, and without any form of trial."

This was the case, and the whole case, as presented by the English Government ; and the only proper method of meeting it as a question between the United States and Great Britain was, to confine the discussion to the single point upon which the complaint was based, because all others were waived. The issue thus made was a very simple one, and it could have been triumphantly met by our Government, so far as the argument was concerned. Vattel declares, in substance, that the ambassador of an enemy may be stopped in transit ; and Lord Stowell, one of the highest and most respected of English authorities, uses this language, which is explicit and positive : " The belligerent may stop the ambassador of the enemy on his passage ;" and lest there might be some doubt in regard to the persons which this principle would include, he states it somewhat more broadly on another occasion : " It appears to me, on principle, to be but reasonable, that whenever it is of sufficient importance to the enemy that such persons should be sent out on the public service, and at the public expense, it should afford equal ground of forfeiture against the vessel that may be let out for a purpose so intimately connected with hostile operations." So far as the authority of Vattel and one of the most eminent English judges can avail, these settle the whole case in our favor. But the British Government was not in the mood to listen to argument, however convincing, nor to be governed by its own acknowledged principles of policy. She seemed determined to humble us by the surrender of Slidell and Mason, or to declare war. The United States, tasked to its utmost strength as was thought, by the rebellion, decided to deliver them up, and then construct a home argument in defence of its action. It was necessary, not to prove that England had no cause of complaint, for that could be easily shown from her own authorities and her own practice, but to prevent a foreign war, and this could be avoided

only by giving up the traitors. Then, to maintain itself before the country, it was needful for the Government to show that this was done, not because of the threat of Great Britain, but because we were constrained by our previously settled and acknowledged policy. In order that this might appear, diligent search was made through the heated discussions which we had with England when she, the great naval power of the world, was laying upon us her heavy and most oppressive hands, and we, using the only weapon we then had, argument, were pressing to an extreme the defence of the rights of neutrals.

The point of our protest was, that Great Britain visited our ships and impressed American seamen, under the pretence that they were the subjects of England, and that the officer conducting the search decided each case himself, without reference to any other authority, and without even the form of a trial. It is doubtless true that no greater outrage than this was ever committed on the seas; but it is not very easy to perceive how a protest, however decided and earnest against the right of impressing American citizens, and that under a mere pretence, can be made to cover the case of arresting the ambassadors of an enemy, about whose identity and character there was no question whatever in the minds of any.

When, to cover the case of an ambassador, it was shown that our statesmen in their arguments had specified the only classes that could be lawfully stopped in transit, viz., persons apparently in the military or naval service of the enemy, it seems perfectly clear that this phrase was intended to assert the principle presented by Lord Stowell, that any public agent in the employ and in the pay of the enemy's government might properly be stopped; and therefore the naming of military and naval officers is to be interpreted not *exclusively*, but as including the classes of public officers which they represent—those in the pay and employ of the government. This alone seems to be in accordance with reason; and without the privilege of arresting such public agents, a nation would be deprived of one important means of self-protection.

In the very nature and fitness of things it seems impossible to assign any reason for the right of arresting one in the military or naval service of an enemy, which would not equally

apply in the case of any other public servant of that enemy. A military or naval officer belongs to one class of public agents, and this is the only ground of arresting such a one; but there are other classes equally important in the civil service, and such a one, clothed with the powers of an ambassador, is generally capable of accomplishing more for his government than an officer in the army or navy. In the case of Slidell and Mason it is undoubtedly true that, as ambassadors, they were far more dangerous to the United States than any officers in the rebel army or navy could be; and it seems absurd to contend for the privilege of stopping at pleasure any man wearing an enemy's uniform, and permit such men, the highest civil officers, to go unhindered on their mission of mischief. This would be, not to assert a principle, but to deny and exclude a principle by a narrow interpretation of phrases. If it be urged that only persons in uniform are included, because the uniform determined the character of the wearer, so that there could be no dispute; then if other evidence is presented equally conclusive as a uniform could be, why should not the agent thus identified in person and official character be dealt with as an officer of the enemy's government?

In the case of the rebel emissaries, there was no question in regard to either their personal identity or the official capacity in which they were acting. It needed no military insignia to show that they were distinguished public agents in the service of the rebel government.

Notwithstanding, therefore, that they may be excluded from those liable to arrest by a possible and narrow interpretation of the language of our statesmen when directing their argument to quite another point, they certainly are *included* among those who may rightfully be stopped "*in transitu*" by every principle of public law. If this is so, and as Captain Wilkes determined to make no demand upon the vessel itself, from motives of humanity, it is clear that it was not necessary to carry the steamer into port for adjudication, so far as Slidell and Mason were concerned; for the whole case in regard to their identity and official character was already decided, not by Captain Wilkes, but by their own acknowledgment, and by the universal agreement of all parties.

The point was also made, in the argument before the people, that we had no right to seize the dispatches of an enemy. This, also, is contrary to British law, laid down by Lord Stowell. The American authority for the denial of this right is found, as was claimed, in the fact that in some of our treaties in regard to contraband articles, after enumerating many, lest the list should be incomplete, the following phrase is used: "All other merchandise and *things* (not already in the list) shall be considered free;" and as a dispatch is a *thing*, it was argued that the dispatches of an enemy cannot be seized. It is not probable that this argument would have been used if a better one could have been found. The Queen of England, speaking as the monarch for Great Britain, in her proclamation issued at the beginning of the rebellion, stated the principles of English law by enumerating dispatches among contraband articles; and it scarcely admits of doubt that this sets forth correctly the conceded law of nations.

This whole case, when stripped of every thing irrelevant, turns on a single question. Was the commander of the *San Jacinto* bound by the law of nations to send in the *Trent* for adjudication, instead of seizing the rebel ambassadors and permitting the steamer to proceed upon her voyage? If Mason and Slidell had been rebel officers, wearing their uniform, would the British Government have had any just cause of complaint if Captain Wilkes had taken them out without capturing the vessel? If she was liable to capture in such a case, our Government might have condemned the omission; but why should England be offended at the escape of her vessel? If the law of nations allows a military officer of the enemy to be taken out of a vessel without requiring the capture of the vessel itself, then the *spirit*, if not the letter of that law, would justify Captain Wilkes in allowing the *Trent* to proceed.

England, in a most heartless and arrogant manner, took advantage of our hour of weakness to seek or make an occasion of quarrel, intending either to humble us at her feet and before the rebels, or to crush us in a conflict when we were nearly overborne by the struggle with our domestic enemy. She did us a grievous wrong, for which the time of settlement must come at length, not because our Government will watch for the oppor-

tunity of revenge, but such is the constitution of the universe that the "Judge of all the earth" is bound, as a righteous moral Governor, to see that every wrong is righted, by rendering the retribution due. England must eat of the fruit of her doings. The United States, by yielding, avoided a war which would have occasioned great suffering if not national disaster, and the people were saved from any sense of dishonor by the skilful defence which was made. If, however, the comparative power of different forms of iron-clads, and the effect of heavy shot, had been as well known as they were a short time after, England would have been far more cautious in uttering her threats, and the arguments on our side made for the home market, if they had been used, might have been less convincing. It may be safely said that this was the last haughty and unreasonable demand that Great Britain will ever make upon the United States. She has abdicated the dominion of the seas, and she can never again ascend her ocean throne. Her insolent officers have lorded it for the last time with impunity on an American deck; and the threat which was made of sending the "Warrior" to Washington will not in any form be repeated.

There is in America no wish to seek revenge for all the insults and injuries which England has heaped upon us; but there is a proper satisfaction in knowing that the power of such an oppressor as she has been on every sea is now effectually broken. Other nations are now strong enough to compel her to do justice, and, in time, she may learn to love it for its own sake.

No true friend of humanity or freedom, no one who desires the rapid spread of the gospel among the nations, will promote ill-will between England and the United States; but her course has been such as to compel us to be on our guard. In the next Trent case it is likely that she will not make use of her former threats, nor we of our arguments.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AFFAIR AT THE PASSES OF THE MISSISSIPPI.

ONE of the most important duties of the blockading squadron was to prevent, if possible, any contraband trade with New Orleans. As it was the great cotton market of the Southwest, England of course made all possible effort to maintain communication with the city, and the points between it and the sea, where cotton could be obtained. One of the first movements of the Government was to send a part of the blockading squadron to the mouth of the Mississippi. As is well known, this river divides into several channels before it reaches the ocean. These channels are called "Passes," and the point where they divide is known as the "Head of the Passes." Of course a squadron stationed in the river above the "Head of the Passes" would intercept all vessels coming in from the sea.

On the 12th of October, 1861, the blockading squadron in the river at the "Passes" was composed of the following vessels: Richmond, screw-steamer, of about two thousand tons burden, and carrying twenty guns; Vincennes, sloop, seven hundred tons burden, mounting ten guns; Preble, five hundred and sixty-six tons, and carrying eleven guns; and the Water Witch, a small screw-steamer, of four guns. Here was a small squadron indeed; but with its forty-five guns, twenty of which, according to report, were 9-inch Dahlgrens, it seemed sufficiently strong to defend the channel of a river. At 3.45 in the morning, while the watch on board the Richmond were employed in taking in coal from a schooner alongside, a strange craft was discovered close to the ship. By the time the alarm could be given, the Richmond was struck abreast of the port

fore channels with such force as to tear the schooner alongside from her fastenings, and crush in three planks in the ship's side, making a hole about five inches in circumference two feet below the water-line. It proved to be the Hollins ram *Manassas*. Passing aft, the ram endeavored to strike the stern, and failed. As she passed abreast of the *Richmond*, a broadside from the 9-inch guns was fired at her. The darkness prevented the officers of the *Richmond* from discovering whether any damage was done. When we remember how quickly this same ram *Manassas* was afterward demolished by Captain Melancthon Smith, in the Mississippi, at the battle with the forts and rebel fleet, it provokes a smile to think of the panic which was spread through the blockading fleet. Those in command saw fire-rafts and rebel steamers coming down the river, and instantly the cables were all slipped, and the fleet was making its escape as rapidly as possible down the river and out to sea by the Southwest Pass. The *Richmond* and the *Vincennes* ran aground, and Commander Handy, of the *Vincennes*, having laid a train to his magazine, abandoned his ship with his officers and men, and repaired for safety on board the *Richmond*. It is said that a cool old tar, as he was leaving the ship, contemptuously kicked the train, already fired, aside, and thus saved the vessel. Handy and his comrades waited a "*reasonable time* for the explosion," as the report states, and then ventured back to their ship. The *Vincennes* was abandoned about 9.30 A. M. Five rebel steamers, such as were so quickly disposed of by Farragut's fleet afterward, had come down the river and were firing at long range, but at 10 o'clock they all withdrew up the river, not deeming themselves strong enough to attack two ships aground, and one of them abandoned by her crew. The ram was seen no more. Commander Handy, having regained his ship that refused to be blown up, proceeded to throw overboard his guns in order to hasten his escape, although no enemy was in sight. It is but just to Captain Pope, who commanded the *Richmond*, that his own statement of this affair should be inserted here :

UNITED STATES STEAMER RICHMOND, }  
OFF PASS à l'OUTRE, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, October 17, 1861. }

SIR : My report to you in regard to our leaving the head of the Passes having been made in a great hurry, in order to acquaint you as



soon as possible of the leading facts of the case, many incidents were omitted which I will now report.

After the first blow given to this ship by the ram, on the morning of the 12th instant, it remained under our port quarter, apparently endeavoring to fix herself in a position to give us a second blow, but the slipping of our chain and the ship ranging ahead under steam frustrated the object. The ram dropped astern, but soon gathered headway and ranged our port beam, receiving the fire of the port battery, some guns of which were discharged twice. It then ranged ahead, passing up the river, receiving the fire of the port battery of the Preble, disappearing in the darkness. Owing to the darkness, I was unable to see the effect of our shot upon her, but some officers are of opinion they heard shot strike the ram. I passed the Preble and stood up the river, when Acting Master Wilcox reporting we were getting too close to the starboard shore, the helm was put up and the ship rapidly fell off, presenting her broadside up and down the river. As soon as she had drifted near the head of the Passes, ineffectual attempts were made to get her head upstream, when I found myself a mile and a half down the Southwest Pass. I then put the helm up, continued down the river, hoping to be able to get her head round off Pilot Town. In doing this, she drifted some distance below, grounding broadside to. Soon after this the enemy opened their fire upon us, which was kept up for about two hours. The day before leaving the head of the Passes, I had succeeded in placing one of our 9-inch broadside guns on the top-gallant forecastle, giving a long range, and it was continually fired during the engagement. About 9 o'clock, A. M., during the firing, it was reported to me that several boats filled with men were leaving the Vincennes; some went on board the Water Witch, others came to this ship. In a few minutes Commander Handy, with several of his officers, came on board; Commander Handy having wrapped around his waist, in broad folds, an American flag, and, upon being asked, stated he had abandoned his ship in obedience to signal. Being told no such signal had been made, he insisted "he so read it," that Captain Winslow had so read it.

The following day Lieutenant Commanding Winslow being asked, remarked "He saw no such signal;" that when he was asked by one of Captain Handy's officers if that was the meaning of the signal, sent word to Captain Handy "that it was impossible" to get guns out of his stern ports and fight his ship. As soon as it was thought, from the description of the slow-match, that it had gone out, Captain Handy, his officers and crew, returned to their ship. In the evening I received

a note from Captain Handy, a copy of which, and my reply, is enclosed.

After I had taken the guns and ammunition from the McClellan, she was sent to the assistance of the Vincennes, and endeavored to get her afloat; in the mean time I carried out a stream anchor from this ship astern, and, after unsuccessful attempts for two or three hours, the McClellan returned to this ship, and was lashed alongside to wait until a rise of the tide. At early daylight of the 13th instant, the South Carolina, Commander Alden, came in, and I directed him to proceed, and, if possible, get the Vincennes afloat. Soon after, this ship was got afloat, her head down-stream, and the McClellan was instantly cast off and went to assist in getting the Vincennes afloat. As there was not room for this ship to lay at anchor, or to turn to point her head up the stream, I had no other alternative than to cross the bar and anchor outside. My mind was very much relieved, knowing that the armament of four rifled guns on board the McClellan, together with the long gun of the South Carolina, would keep the enemy at bay. At about 2 P. M. the Vincennes was got afloat, crossed the bar, and anchored near this ship, and the South Carolina was immediately dispatched to Pass à l'Outre, to guard that place until I could send him a relief.

My retreat down the pass, although painful to me, was to save the ships, by preventing them being sunk and falling into the hands of the enemy; and it was evident to me they had us in their power, by the operation of the ram and the fire-rafts. If I have erred in all this matter, it is an error of judgment; the whole affair came upon me so suddenly that no time was left for reflection, but called for immediate action and decision. The ram having made its appearance next day at the mouth of the river, the impression is she sustained no injury from our shot, only waiting an opportunity to destroy our ships.

It having been rumored there was a panic on board this ship at the time she was engaged with the enemy, I state it to be false; both officers and men exhibited the utmost coolness and determination to do their duty. My orders and those of all the officers were carried out with as much coolness as if it had been an every-day affair, and their whole conduct merits high commendation; and they would feel gratified to prove their bravery by being permitted to take part in the contemplated attack on Pensacola, as requested in notes from me to you on this subject. In both engagements with the enemy, the whole fire appeared to be directed to the destruction of this ship, most of the shot being, apparently, directed to the quarter of this vessel, presumed for the purpose of disabling our rudder and propeller.

I omitted, in my hasty report, to mention the essential aid I have received from Captain Gray, commanding the army transport McClellan, in getting this ship and the Vincennes afloat. From Lieutenant Commanding Winslow, commanding the Water Witch, I received every possible assistance that could be rendered.

I directed Commander French, of the Preble, as soon as it could be done, to Pass à l'Outre to guard that entrance. This he was unable to do at the time; the wind being ahead and a strong current setting to leeward, he was barely able to hold his own. He came in and anchored and reported to me; he was quite out of wood and coal. I told him he could procure wood off the Northeast Pass, where he would be stationed after the arrival of one of the steamers at Pass à l'Outre. He replied, it was impossible to get wood there, and earnestly requested to go to Ship Island, where he would in two days procure wood sufficient for himself and the Vincennes. I reluctantly consented to his doing so, knowing that one of the steamers, either the South Carolina or Huntsville, would reach Pass à l'Outre in advance of him.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN POPE, *Captain.*

*Flag-Officer WM. W. McKean, commanding Blockading Squadron.*

P. S.—This, and my first report to you, embraces all the facts, to my best recollection; and if they are not satisfactory, I respectfully ask for a court of inquiry in the matter; and if it cannot be granted without detriment to the service at this time, that it may be referred to the honorable Secretary of the Navy.

JOHN POPE.

The following is a copy of a note received from Commander Handy on the eve of his ship getting aground, and my reply to the same:

SIR: We are aground. We have only two guns that will bear in the direction of the enemy. Shall I remain on board after the moon goes down with my crippled ship and worn-out men? Will you send me word what countersign my boats shall use if we pass near your ship? While we have moonlight, would it not be better to leave the ship? Shall I burn her when I leave her?

Respectfully,

ROBERT HANDY.

UNITED STATES STEAMER RICHMOND, }  
SOUTHWEST PASS, October 12, 1861. }

SIR: You say your ship is aground. It will be your duty to defend your ship up to the last moment, and not to fire her except it be to pre-

vent her from falling into the hands of the enemy. I do not think the enemy will be down to-night, but in case they do, fight them to the last. You have boats enough to save *all* your men. I do not approve of your leaving your ship until every effort is made to defend her from falling into their hands.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN POPE, *Captain.*

*Commander R. HANDY, commanding U. S. Ship Vincennes.*

Men should not be judged too harshly, acting under such circumstances. Rams, torpedoes, and fire-rafts were then almost untried weapons of war. The most extravagant reports were circulated concerning the new and terrible inventions which the rebels had prepared, and lively imaginations invested them with almost supernatural powers. Commodore Hollins had taken great pains to spread abroad reports of the wonders he was about to perform; and it was perhaps no more than was to be expected of weak flesh and blood, that when an unknown sea-monster came silently up to such a ship as the Richmond, unsuspectingly, taking in coal, and ripped three planks out of her with its snout, there should have been some signs of a panic, especially when fire-rafts and hostile steamers were seen coming on.

Still, after making all due allowances, and looking back on the scene *after* the battle of New Orleans, this fleet of forty-five guns, and such a ship as the Richmond one of the squadron, appears in a very ridiculous aspect fleeing down the river like frightened sheep, *chased* out of the Mississippi by a ram that was going the *other way* as fast as possible, escaping from fire-rafts that had gone ashore, and from river steamers that dared not venture within range of the Richmond's guns! The commander of the Vincennes, laying a train with a slow-match to his magazine, and then tumbling overboard with his officers and men, and, after having waited at a safe distance till satisfied that the ship would not blow up, stealing noiselessly back to start the water and throw overboard his guns, presents an example unmatched, it is thought, in the history of the Navy. It was certainly a great relief to all parties to find themselves below the bar, where the grounded fire-rafts could not follow them.

The ram seems not to have been injured, though Captain Pope had the satisfaction of reporting that "some officers are of opinion they heard shots strike the ram." Hollins boasted that he had driven the blockading squadron out of the river; and New Orleans, it is said, was illuminated.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A GALLANT EXPLOIT.—DESTRUCTION OF THE SCHOONER JUDAH.

IN September, 1861, the harbor of Pensacola, then in the hands of the rebels, was the scene of one of those heroic deeds which, though they require great daring, courage, and skill, do not much attract the attention of the world because they are not great battles, and yet they are often the means by which great successes are afterward obtained. In a small basin, formed by the navy-yard on one side and a dock on the other, was a schooner which the rebels were evidently fitting out for a privateer. She had been watched for some time by the officers of the fleet, and at length Commodore Mervine, then commanding that division of the blockading squadron, with his flag on the Colorado, determined to make an attempt to destroy her, knowing that, if permitted to escape and go to sea, she might do great damage to our commerce. She was in a position where it was very difficult to reach her without great exposure to the attacking party. A 10-inch columbiad and a 12-pounder field-piece were mounted so as to command her deck and the wharf to which she was moored ; and there were, as reported, about a thousand men within call in the navy-yard. To attack the schooner under such circumstances was, at best, a perilous enterprise. Commodore Mervine, however, deemed the destruction of the privateer of sufficient importance to warrant the risk both of failure and the loss of men.

Accordingly, on the night of the 13th of September, a boat expedition was fitted out from the frigate Colorado, consisting of the following boats : first launch, Lieutenant J. H. Russell commanding the expedition, thirty-nine men ; first cutter, Lieu-

tenant J. G. Sproston, eighteen men ; second cutter, Lieutenant F. B. Blake, twenty-six men ; third cutter, Midshipman T. Steece, seventeen men ; in all, one hundred officers, sailors, and marines.

Lieutenants Russell and Blake were to attack the vessel, while Lieutenant Sproston and Midshipman Steece were to spike, if possible, the two guns mounted in the yard for the protection of the schooner. The attack was made on the morning of the 14th, at half-past 3 o'clock. The schooner was found moored to the wharf. She was armed with one pivot and two broadside guns, and her crew was on board, ready to repel any attack. The boats were discovered and hailed when about one hundred yards from the wharf. The sentry gave the alarm by firing his musket, and almost immediately a volley was given from the schooner's deck. Under this destructive fire each oarsman used his utmost strength, and the boats almost leaped to their mark, two striking the navy-yard dock where the heavy columbiad was mounted, and two rushing alongside the schooner. Only one man was found guarding the guns on the wharf, and he was shot down by Gunner Boreton just as he was in the act of levelling his musket at Lieutenant Sproston, both pieces being discharged at the same instant. The party having been separated in the darkness, only these two officers, Sproston and Boreton, were able to find the guns, and, after the shooting of the sentry, they were immediately spiked.

The contest for the possession of the schooner was a severe one. In addition to the crew on deck, there were men in her tops who poured a destructive fire into the boats. Immediately upon boarding, a hand-to-hand fight began on the deck. The crew of the schooner were soon driven to the wharf ; but they rallied there, and, being joined by the shore-guard, kept up a continuous fire.

While the battle was thus going on, some were busily engaged in firing the schooner. Fires were kindled with little result in several places, but at length an effectual one was started in the cabin by Assistant-Engineer White and Patrick Driscoll, a coal-heaver. She was soon in flames, and the boats were shoved off. By this time the whole force in the yard was aroused, and as they gathered in masses, the retiring boats opened

upon them with canister from two howitzers, firing six rounds before they were out of range. The schooner, while burning, drifted from her moorings, and, having burned to the water's edge, sank opposite Fort Barrancas. The returning boats reached the Colorado about daylight. The dangerous character of this expedition and the severity of the fight are sufficiently shown by the fact that nearly one-fifth of the party were either killed or wounded. Some of the wounds were mortal, and several others were very severe.

In this fight, as in every battle, there were incidents showing on how slender a point the issue of life and death is hung, so slight as to suggest the interposition of Him who numbers the hairs of the head, and marks the sparrow's fall. When Lieutenant Sproston met the sentry who guarded the 10-inch columbiad in the navy-yard, the instant in which the rebel delayed in settling his aim, cost him his life and saved that of Sproston, for in that instant he received the bullet of Boreton.

After Lieutenant Blake was in his boat, when leaving the Colorado, a flask of liquor was handed him, in anticipation of the wants of the wounded. He placed it in the lower pocket of his overcoat; and finding it to be inconvenient there, he shifted it to the side-pocket over the left breast. In boarding the schooner he felt a smart blow, and, after the fight, found that a ball had struck the flask with just force enough to perforate it right over the heart, and leave a slight contusion on the breast. Was the shifting of the flask accidental?

A strange and sad fate befell the first man, a marine, who boarded the rebel schooner. In springing on board he lost his white cap, the distinguishing mark of the boats' crews, and was bayoneted through mistake by one of his own comrades. He was known by the name of Smith. By the letters found in his bag after his death, it was found that Smith was an assumed name. There were letters from his mother, filled with sad solicitude for his safety and general welfare, breathing all a mother's tenderness. There were others from his father, stating how his dearest hopes for himself and children had been blighted. The oldest brother is in the grave. "You have chosen this roving life, and the youngest, our only prop, may be taken away." He had received a classical education, and the steps by which he had



descended are among the secrets of a darkened household. He was not among the young men who went forth from colleges and theological seminaries, and luxurious homes, to lay their all on their country's altar, but he had evidently entered the service in order to hide himself from the world. The Army and the Navy, in addition to those who went forth from noble and patriotic impulses, also received hundreds who had sunk through misfortune, dissipation, or crime, from the higher social levels, and sought to bury in the camp or on the deck of the ship their shame or their despair. Some of the saddest secrets of earth are buried in the soldiers' graves, or have gone down at sea with the shotted hammock. Many a heart has been long dead before it ceased to beat, and many a one was broken before it was struck by the shot.

In the return of the killed and wounded in the Colorado's boats appeared this brief record: "John Smith, marine, private, killed." What a history lay concealed beneath that short statement—a story of a wasted life and of broken hearts! Such homes as the death of "John Smith" made desolate are those on which the darkest sorrow of the war has fallen, for no ray of glory comes through the thick shadow of death. Memory brings not the image of the grave of a hero, a patriot, offering up his young life as a noble sacrifice, but the setting in blood of life's star, that had been falling and growing dark before. How often some such brief record of the war has had for a few hearts terrible meanings, of which the world knows nothing! John Smith's death made but a little blank in the great frigate's company; but how wide a breach there was in the distant home where the father and mother sat, bearing wearily the weight upon the heart! What might be called the domestic history of the war would be one of more thrilling interest than the story of its campaigns, its battles, and its victories.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BOMBARDMENT OF GALVESTON.—AFFAIR AT SHIP ISLAND.

ONE of the methods most industriously and persistently used by our enemies, both at home and in Europe, was to represent the North as carrying on the war in a barbarous spirit, and in wanton violation of the rules of civilized warfare. War, in its best aspect, is not a gentle art; and in the best-disciplined armies, whose soldiers have been drawn from well-ordered communities, there are doubtless many acts discreditable to humanity, and it was to be expected that these would be seized upon and exaggerated by those who were intent upon injuring the cause of the Union; but it was not at first supposed that even systematic slander could have induced so large a portion of Europe to believe that the armies of the North were composed of savages, let loose upon patriots bravely contending for their rights, and that their whole course was marked by outrage, robbery, and murder. England, especially in these matters, verified the Scripture. She believed with her heart; she believed not only without facts, but in spite of the facts, because she wished to have it so. The agents of foreign governments, excepting those of Russia, were nearly all in sympathy with the South, and they seized upon every act that could be misrepresented to the discredit of the North, and sent it home with the sanction of official signatures.

One of these transactions thus distorted, exaggerated, and circulated to the injury of the cause of the Union, was the partial bombardment of Galveston on the 3d of August, 1861. The rebels, who were then in possession of Galveston, had erected some batteries directly in the rear of the town, so that any shot

fired at the batteries would be likely to injure the city and its unarmed inhabitants. The blockading squadron lying off the place had made no attack upon the town, confining itself to closing the port, so far as possible, against contraband traders.

On the morning of the 3d of August, at daylight, one of the tenders of the squadron, a small gunboat, returning from a cruise, found herself unexpectedly within range of two of the rebel batteries, which almost immediately opened fire upon her, and she promptly returned it. Commander Alden, of the *South Carolina*, which was lying near, supposing there must have been some mistake, waited during the day for some explanation from the authorities on shore. So far from disavowing the act, they were evidently making preparations for a fight. Commander Alden, therefore, about 4 o'clock P. M., got under way and went in toward the town. The moment his ship came within range the batteries opened fire upon him, which was at once returned, and the action continued until some fifteen shots had been fired, when, in order not to injure the town, the steamer drew off. This act of self-defence was the cause of the following correspondence :

U. S. STEAMER *SOUTH CAROLINA*, OFF GALVESTON, *August 10, 1861.*

SIR : I have the honor herewith to submit a report of a short but lively affair which took place on the 3d instant between this ship and two of the batteries located near to and back of the city of Galveston. The city is, as the accompanying sketch will show, entirely at our mercy, but I have never had any intention of troubling them, as I considered my duty was simply to blockade and stop the commerce of the port, as I frankly told their military commandant, Captain (now Colonel) Moore, who called upon me, shortly after our arrival, to inquire into the truth or falsity of a report, to wit, that I had threatened to bombard the town if my duty of blockading was interfered with by them in any way. I told the captain, in reply, that I seldom made threats under any circumstances ; that I had not, nor should I upon so momentous a subject as this, presume to think what I should do, believing as I did, as far as the town was concerned, that they would gladly let us alone. But I was disappointed ; for on the 3d instant, as one of our tenders was returning from a cruise to the southward, in charge of Mr. Rodney Baxter, acting master, she found herself early in the morning near two of the rebel batteries, which shortly opened their fire upon her, which she

returned in the most gallant manner ; and, after exchanging a few shots, came and reported the facts to me. The whole affair passed under my own observation, our anchorage being only three miles distant ; and while I was made to realize that people could be so insane as to initiate hostilities with us when their town was so completely at our mercy, I was restrained from going in and engaging their batteries on the moment, believing that the whole affair might have been the result of misunderstanding or accident. I therefore waited all day for some explanation or disavowal on the part of the authorities, but none came. On the contrary, steam was gotten up on the General Rusk, a large sea-steamer which has been preparing for sea for some time ; and other demonstrations satisfied me that, so far from their volunteering any explanations, they were ready for us, and indeed wanted a brush. I therefore, at about 4 o'clock p. m., got under way, and, after towing a prize which we have a little to seaward, out of the reach of the steamer General Rusk, if she should come out while we were engaged, I stood down toward the batteries. Our moving was the signal for the General Rusk to get under way, and as she approached the bar I turned to give her chase ; but she was as quick in that evolution as we were, and ran back with all speed. She attempted it the second time, but after that was content to go in and watch the result, out of harm's way.

Being satisfied that there was no more diversion in that direction, I resumed my original course, and stood toward the batteries ; but we were no sooner in range than they opened their fire upon us, when the action became general. After exchanging some dozen or fifteen shots with them, I withdrew, satisfied that throughout the whole affair we were doing more injury to the city or perhaps unoffending citizens than to the batteries or those who sought the collision.

The nearest point that we could get to the shore, our ship drawing twelve feet, was about one mile, where we found thirteen and a half feet of water. Their firing was so extremely bad, considering the large object that this ship, almost entirely light, presents, that not a shot touched us. Ours, I regret to say, so far as the poor Portuguese and other unoffending sufferers go, was more effective. The only information I have from the city on the subject is in a very insulting letter, gotten up in the shape of a protest, remonstrating against my acts of the 3d instant, and signed by all the foreign consuls at Galveston, a copy of which is herewith sent, together with my answer. I should add that some of the crew of our tender had occasion a few days ago to land down the coast in pursuit of fresh provisions, when we were informed that a captain of a company or captain of a gun and others in

one of the batteries were killed in the affair of the 3d instant; also that one of our shells went into the middle of the town, but from some cause or other did not burst.

Respectfully, I am your obedient servant,

JAMES ALDEN, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer WM. MERVINE, commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

GALVESTON, August 5, 1861.

SIR: The undersigned, consuls and vice-consuls at Galveston, consider it their duty to enter their solemn protest against your bombardment of this city on the evening of the 3d instant, without having given any notice, so that the women and children might have been removed, and also against your firing a shell in the midst of a large crowd of unarmed citizens, amongst whom were many women and children, causing thereby the death of an unoffending Portuguese, and wounding boys and peaceably disposed persons, as acts of inhumanity, unrecognized in modern warfare, and meriting the condemnation of Christian and civilized nations.

ARTHUR LYNN, *British Consul.*

JAMES FREDERICK, *Hanoverian and Oldenburg Consul, and, in the absence of J. W. Jackarsh, Acting Consul for Prussia and Hamburg.*

J. C. KUHN, *Swiss Consul, Vice-Consul for Russia.*

J. BARKEMIER, *Deputy Consul for Bremen, Saxony, Belgium, Holland, and Vice-Consul for Austria.*

F. GONZALES, *Mexican Consul.*

F. H. ZETIL, *Consul for Nassau.*

B. THERON, *French Ag't, Consul and Vice-Consul for Spain.*

FREDERICK WAGNER, *Consul pro tem. for Electoral Hesse.*

To Captain JAMES ALDEN, *commanding U. S. Steamer South Carolina.*

UNITED STATES STEAMER SOUTH CAROLINA, }  
BLOCKADING SQUADRON OFF GALVESTON, August 6, 1861. }

GENTLEMEN: I have just received by the hand of Captain Davis your communication of yesterday's date, in which you enter your "solemn protest against your [my] bombardment of this city on the evening of the 3d instant, without having given any notice, so that the women and children might have been removed," and characterizing my proceedings in that connection as "acts of inhumanity, unrecognized in modern warfare, and meriting the condemnation of Christian and civilized nations."

My first impulse, on reading your extraordinary communication, so full of statements at variance with my own knowledge of the facts, was to return it to you, and ask you in all conscience to examine the matter before indorsing such sweeping accusations; but as the facts were all patent, and you might inform yourselves of them if you would, I decided to send you the verbal answer I did, and which may be to some of you quite sufficient; but as it is likely there are others who have signed this extraordinary document who know little or nothing about the matter, and as you all represent countries with which we are at peace and amity, it may perhaps be my duty to state to you the facts of the case. They are simply as follows: Early on the morning of the 3d instant our gunboat found herself near the shore, and shortly afterward (as the result proved) within range of some of the batteries. The first warning she got was a shot—not a blank cartridge, but a shot—not fired ahead or astern of her, to warn her off, *but straight at her*. She, of course, fired back, some shots were exchanged, when she came and reported the facts to me. This was in the morning. I waited all day until nearly four in the afternoon, hoping some explanation, some disavowal of the act, would be sent off. None came. I then got under way and stood in for the batteries, which, you are aware, are built in the rear of and close to the town, merely to see if they could, while they knew the town must be injured by our return fire, repeat such an act of aggression by commencing upon us. We were no sooner within range of their guns, however, than they opened their fire, when we, after exchanging a few shots with them, retired, preferring that it should appear we were beaten off, rather than continue a contest where (as the result shows) so many unoffending citizens must necessarily suffer. If that act merits the "condemnation of Christian and civilized nations," pray, tell me, gentlemen, tell me, what you would have done were you in my place? Again: you protest against my firing a shell into the midst of a "large crowd of unarmed citizens, amongst whom were many women and children." . . . Do you think such an act could have been deliberate or premeditated? Besides, I would ask, was it not the duty of the military commandant, who, by his act in the morning, had invited me to the contest, to see that such were out of the way? Did he not have all day to prepare? It was evident to my mind that they knew we were coming, or why was that demonstration on the steamer General Rusk? In conclusion, let me add that no one can regret the injury done to unoffending individuals more than I do; still I find no complaint of my acts of the 3d instant coming from the military or civil authorities of Galveston; and with due deference to your

consideration and humanity, I must respectfully remark that it is the first time that I have ever heard that the women and children or unarmed citizens of one of our towns were under the protection of foreign consuls.

Respectfully,

JAMES ALDEN,

*Commander U. S. Navy, commanding.*

ARTHUR LYNN, Esq., *British Consul*; J. C. KUHN, Esq., *Swiss Consul*; F. H. ZETTL, Esq., *Consul for Nassau, and others.*

Of course no one of these consuls was ignorant of the main facts in this affair. The letter was evidently written for the European market, and there probably served, in some measure, the intended purpose, to excite a prejudice against the people of the Northern States, and a sympathy for the rebels. After the war, the slanderers were very anxious to regain the friendship they had forfeited.

On the 19th of October, 1861, in Mississippi Sound, there was a brief battle, which shows the manner in which the monotony of life on a blockader was sometimes enlivened, not always without danger. The steamer *Massachusetts* was lying with her fires banked, very much at ease, on that morning, when a strange steamer was discovered in the distance, rapidly approaching. Commander (now Commodore) Melancthon Smith, then in command of the *Massachusetts*, immediately ordered steam. The stranger came on until within about six miles, and then slowed down her engine and fired a "lee gun." The *Massachusetts* was immediately prepared to engage her, and approached with a full head of steam. But the rebel commander had no intention of coming to close action, and, having the advantage of superior speed, kept the *Massachusetts* at the distance of nearly two miles, using against her a 68-pounder rifle gun. In this manner she evidently hoped to cripple her adversary without damage to herself, as with the utmost elevation of the guns of the *Massachusetts* many of the shot and shell fell short. Some of them appeared to take effect, as the heavy gun was silenced after the third discharge, and the steamer immediately sought the shoal water, where the *Massachusetts* very soon was unable to follow her. Though fought at such a distance, this action showed the destructive power of the shell-gun. A shell from the 68-pounder rifle of

the rebel steamer entered the starboard side of the Massachusetts "abaft the engine, five feet above the water-line. It cut through eighteen plank of the main deck, carried away the table, sofas, eight sections of iron steam-pipe, and exploded in the state-rooms on the port side, stripping the bulkheads of four rooms, and setting fire to the vessel. A fragment of the shell hit a timber, breaking all the outside planking from the main to the spar deck, a distance of five and a half feet. The missile that did the damage was exploded by a time-fuse four inches long, the shell measuring fifteen inches in length, seven inches in diameter, with an internal cavity of five inches. Twelve fragments of this shell weighed fifty-eight pounds."

The engagement was continued until the rebel steamer reached shoal water, but without any perceptible damage to her except what has been suggested. The Massachusetts fired seventy-six shot and shell, and four hundred and fifty-five pounds of powder.

After such an exhibition of the havoc which a single shell can make, one is not surprised at the destruction wrought on the Alabama by the heavy shell-guns of the Kearsarge, nor that she was torn in pieces in so short a time. The effect of the guns of the Merrimack upon the Cumberland, Congress, and Minnesota, was equally terrible; and it is fearful to think of the slaughter that may hereafter be made when squadrons equally matched shall engage with shell-guns.



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BLOCKADE.

It was declared in England that the blockade was the great fact of the American war. The thought was a very natural one for those who had previously asserted that it was impossible to establish, in front of such a coast-line, a blockade which would be recognized by the nations as effectual and valid. Such a work had never been attempted; and European nations made (what is with them very common) the mistake of believing that what they had never done Americans could not perform. They of France and England knew well that our Government had only a few ships, not worthy to be called a navy in comparison with their own; and, with all their ships, they would not then have thought it possible to seal up the American coast from Hampton Roads to Mexico, including the shores of the Gulf.

Englishmen therefore, especially, looked forward to a cheap and rich harvest for their commerce. They felt, at first, little anxiety whether the blockade should be held as valid according to the law of nations, or not; for they thought it could be so easily avoided that it would offer no serious obstacle to their trade with the rebel States. It is seldom that more alluring prospects present themselves to men than those with which many English merchants and manufacturers deluded themselves in the beginning of the rebellion. They made merry over the idea of a paper blockade, and they saw, as they believed, an almost unrestricted trade opened to them in the South, and our commerce driven from the ocean by their *neutral* piratical cruisers; they were confident that the rebellion, through their aid, would be successful, and then they

would monopolize the Southern cotton, and the markets of the South.

But when it was found that no skill, or capital, or science, or determination to succeed, could give security to their fleetest steamers, and that every month the increasing stringency of the blockade added new perils to their scandalous traffic, till at length they were almost entirely driven off from the American coast, they were beyond measure astonished, and declared, as has been already stated, that the maintaining a strict blockade along such a line of coast was the great fact of the war.

Perhaps the sober judgment of the world may confirm this opinion. Not only had there been no previous attempt made at any time to guard such an extent of coast, but never before was there seen such an extensive and thoroughly organized effort to destroy the efficiency of a blockade. England had at her disposal the finest commercial marine in the world, shipyards, workmen, material, all the best of their kind, capital without limit, and unbounded enthusiasm in the work; and notwithstanding all these forces and advantages, she was so completely excluded from our shores that she was compelled to abandon the field. It surely was one of the great moral lessons of the war.

The following correspondence will show what naval force the Government had at its command when the question of the blockade was first considered :

EXECUTIVE MANSION, *March 18, 1861.*

SIR : I shall be obliged if you will inform me what amount of naval force you could at once place at the control of the revenue service. And also, whether at some distance of time you could so place an additional force; and how much? and at what time?

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

*Hon. Secretary of the Navy.*

[Confidential.]

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *March 20, 1861.*

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th instant, asking to be informed of the amount of the naval force that could at once be placed at the control of the revenue service; also,

whether at some distance of time an additional force could be so placed—how much? and at what time?

I respectfully state, in reply, that the following vessels could at once be put under orders for such service:

Steam-sloop Brooklyn,	21 guns,	now off Fort Pickens.
Steamer Crusader,	8 "	on special service.
Steamer Pocahontas,	5 "	at Norfolk.
Steamer Water Witch,	3 "	at Philadelphia.
Steamer Mohawk,	5 "	on special service.
Steamer Wyandotte,	5 "	off Fort Pickens.
Steam-sloop Pawnee,	11 "	at Washington.
Frigate Sabine,	50 "	off Fort Pickens.
Sloop Cumberland,	23 "	on way to Norfolk.
Steamer Powhatan,	11 "	at New York.
Sloop St. Louis,	18 "	off Fort Pickens.
Sloop Macedonian,	22 "	off Vera Cruz.

The vessel last named could be withdrawn, if deemed expedient, from her present position in a short time.

With regard to the additional force that could be placed at the control of the revenue service, at some distant time, the *amount* of it would be governed by the number of men allowed by law to the Navy. The number so allowed is 8,500. There are now already in the service about 6,870, leaving 1,630 as the number that could be enlisted under authority of law.

With this number the following vessels could be manned and, it is thought, ready for service within the time stated, should there be no difficulty in obtaining recruits, which is not likely, viz.:

Sloop Germantown,	22 guns,	} in two weeks.
Brig Bainbridge,	6 "	
Brig Perry,	6 "	
Brig Dolphin,	4 "	
Sloop Jamestown,		} in three weeks.
Sloop Plymouth,		
Steam-frigate Minnesota,		
Sloop Preble,		} in four weeks.
Steam-frigate Wabash,		
Steamer Mississippi,		in five weeks.

There could be withdrawn from foreign stations, without serious disadvantage, the following vessels, in about the time stated, viz.: steam-sloop Iroquois from the Mediterranean in two and a half or three months, steam-sloop Seminole from the Brazils in three months, and the steam-sloop Mohican from the coast of Africa in about three months.

The steam-frigate *Niagara* is expected home from Japan some time next month.

There are three other steamers on the African station, the *San Jacinto*, the *Mystic*, and the *Sumter*. Their withdrawal would reduce the squadron below the number of guns required by treaty stipulations. A sloop-of-war would restore the number, but a vessel of that class would not be so effective in suppressing the slave-trade.

The steamers mentioned are well adapted for service on our coast.

In addition to the vessels hereinbefore mentioned, the following vessels at the several navy-yards, not in commission, could be prepared for service in the time stated, if the appropriations and the number of seamen authorized by law admitted of it, viz. :

Frigate <i>St. Lawrence</i> ,	50 guns,	} in three weeks.
Steam-frigate <i>Colorado</i> ,	40 "	
Steam-frigate <i>Merrimack</i> ,	40 "	} in four weeks.
Frigate <i>Santee</i> ,	50 "	
Steam-frigate <i>Roanoke</i> ,	40 "	} in six weeks.
Sloop <i>Savannah</i> ,	24 "	
Sloop <i>Vincennes</i> ,	20 "	
Sloop <i>Dale</i> ,	16 "	} in three months.
Sloop <i>Marion</i> ,	16 "	
Sloop-of-the-line <i>Vermont</i> ,	84 "	
Frigate <i>Raritan</i> ,	50 "	} in four months.
Frigate <i>Potomac</i> ,	50 "	
Frigate <i>Brandywine</i> ,	50 "	in five months.
Frigate <i>Columbia</i> ,	50 "	} in six months.
Steam-sloop <i>Pensacola</i> ,	— "	

The following vessels, in the Pacific, could be employed in service on the Western coast, and be put under orders for the purpose in a few weeks : steam-sloop *Lancaster*, 22 guns ; steam-sloop *Narragansett*, 5 guns ; steam-sloop *Wyoming*, 6 guns ; steamer *Saranac*, 9 guns ; sloop *St. Mary's*, 22 guns ; sloop *Cyane*, 18 guns ; steamer *John Hancock*, 3 guns.

The sloop *Vandalia* has been ordered to proceed from the East Indies to the coast of California, and the *Dakota* steam-sloop could be put under similar orders. Both of these vessels are at present attached to the East India squadron.

I have not mentioned in this communication the ships employed in transporting stores—the *Release*, now at New York, and the *Supply*, on the way to Pensacola. Both of them are armed, and might be employed in the revenue service with some advantage.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*The President of the United States.*

Such was the condition of the American Navy when it was determined to declare the Southern coast in a state of blockade. If there can be a case in which partial ignorance is better than knowledge, this was probably one ; for if the magnitude of the work undertaken could have been accurately measured then, it might have been deemed by the officers of the Government, as it was by others, an impossible task. Few of the most important and successful enterprises which have made men famous would have been commenced, if the whole field of action with all its difficulties had been spread out at first before the eye of the projectors. But with the end held steadily in view, and the obstacles presenting themselves so as to be separately seen, met, and overcome, men gather courage and confidence as they proceed.

It was well for the country that our resources were quite as much underrated at first as were the difficulties of establishing and maintaining the blockade. As the war went on, it was found that the mercantile marine could supply, far more rapidly than was at first supposed, vessels that were admirably adapted for the coast-guard service, while very many of them were capable of bearing a heavy armament. A large number of our swift steamers, with a few rifled guns, were really formidable ships, though they could not endure the stroke of shot or shell like the heavier frames of the regular men-of-war. The best of them, however, were quite sufficient for the work for which they were required. They were good sea-boats, and had been constructed with an eye to speed, because they were designed for passenger vessels on lines of travel where competition was active, and they presented therefore some of the best specimens of this style of naval architecture. It was soon found, therefore, that the Navy Department could command, by the energetic use of proper means, a fleet of steamers which would meet in good measure the most urgent and immediate demand, by the employment of which time would be gained for the construction of those better fitted to bear the rough usage of the fight.

In a shorter time, it is believed, than such a fleet was ever before procured, manned, and armed, a line of these steamers was stretched along our coast ; and, almost as soon as watchful England could send her swift contraband traders across the sea

with aid and comfort for the rebels, our own blockading fleet was at its station ready to receive them. At Galveston, and the mouth of the Rio Grande, at the passes of the Mississippi, at Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and Wilmington, they found the watchful blockaders, which rendered their traffic at once, and from the first, dangerous and uncertain.

One of the most important changes produced by our war, in naval operations, was the employment of a steam navy for the purposes of a blockade. It was the first experiment of the kind on a large scale which the world had seen. It was a triumph won by the steamship on a new field. It had been shown, contrary to what was thought to be, by some, mathematical demonstration, that a steamer could make an ocean voyage of twelve or fifteen days without touching at any port for coal or supplies; but whether a steamship could be kept at sea for months was a question which no previous experience enabled men to decide. More important and more perplexing was the question how a squadron of blockading steamers could be furnished with the necessary supplies, in such quantities and with such regularity as would insure success. The difficulty would have been far less, could our vessels have been placed within a short distance of friendly ports, from whence in a few hours what was needed could have been obtained. But the line of the blockading squadron was stretched for its whole length, of more than three thousand miles, along a hostile shore, every entrance to which was guarded by a watchful foe, so that even water at first had to be transported from Northern ports.

To devise, and execute successfully, a plan by which these numerous ships could be kept at their post in an efficient condition, so that there should be no break in the line through which the English blockade-runners could safely pass, was a work which required comprehensiveness of design, and energy, promptitude, and accuracy in its execution. It must be remembered that the blockading squadron was to keep the sea not only during the pleasant months of the year, but in the rough spring-time, and during the winter storms, upon a coast proverbially dangerous. In order, therefore, to estimate the labor which the Navy Department must perform in addition to the *fighting* of the war, let it be considered that several hundred ships, some of

them thousands of miles away, were to be kept in every respect in a serviceable state, and so that a blockade might be maintained which unwilling England should be compelled to acknowledge as valid.

At first, as has been heretofore stated, there were no condensers for the ships, and no water could be obtained on the coast, except at great risk and even loss of life, so that even this was transported from the North for the supply of the whole fleet. The crews had to be maintained at their full complement, the sick were to be sent home, and the places of these, and of those that died, were to be filled by recruits. Spars, sails, rigging, needed to be renewed; roughly used as they were by the coast-storms, the engines required repairs through constant work, and the wear and tear upon the whole ship was much greater than when after a short voyage every thing can be made snug in harbor. Great labor and incessant care were laid upon the chief of the Ordnance Bureau. The old guns and carriages were not reliable, and were continually giving way under the pressure of the service, and the new rifled cannon were often fractured, so that it was a very difficult task to keep at all points a sufficient supply of serviceable guns. It required the most accurate and minute knowledge of the state of affairs, and a nicely-adjusted system of transportation, to provide each ship, at the proper time, with guns, shot, shell, and all that pertains to the proper equipment of a vessel-of-war.

The magnitude of the work which was performed under the direction of the Ordnance Bureau may be understood from the fact that the Navy was increased very rapidly from less than fifty to nearly seven hundred ships, and that the Government was almost entirely destitute of cannon fit for service at the beginning of the war. Nor would the difficulties have been so great as they were, if there had been at the disposal of the Government, or even in the country, a large number of founderies prepared for the manufacture of artillery. But even the factories were to be erected, or those in existence had to be materially altered, before guns could be made suitable for arming the vessels which were needed both for fighting and for the purposes of the blockade. At the same time the immense number of new guns required by the army employed a large proportion

of the producing power of the manufacturers; and it is easy to see, therefore, that under such circumstances it required both organizing and executive ability of a high order to begin with the preparation of founderies, and so arrange and carry out the system of supply that the new ships which were being sent forward so rapidly should not wait for an armament, whether guns or ammunition, and those already in service should be kept in efficient condition.

The formidable difficulties with which this bureau had to contend will appear more clearly if we remember that the fighting of our ships was chiefly with strong forts and earthworks, armed with the best and heaviest artillery then known in Europe, and some of still larger calibre manufactured by the rebels themselves. Of course, ships, guns, and gun-carriages often suffered severely, and it was necessary that the constant loss should be as constantly supplied. In the blockading service the guns were necessarily, in the chase, fired at long ranges, at high elevations, and with large charges of powder, thus putting them to the severest proof, a trial which no guns endured so well as the Dahlgrens, not one of which, it is said, burst during the war; a fact which shows how much this distinguished and scientific officer has contributed to the security of his country.

The chiefs of the Ordnance Bureau, Harwood, Dahlgren, and Wise, who made success possible for our officers by their prompt and efficient management, are entitled to the gratitude of their country. This also is true of the heads of the other bureaus, and it is proposed to notice them in their due place, for courage and skill would have availed little on board our ships, had our officers and seamen not been promptly supplied with the proper material of war. Without suitable ships, and guns and ammunition, without proper clothing and food for the men, without coal, spars, sails, and all the countless things by which a man-of-war is kept in fighting trim, what could even Farragut or Porter have accomplished? The organizers at home, in the quiet of their offices, were among the true forces of the war, as much as those who reigned on the bloody deck, though the highest honors are properly awarded to those who add to all else, the exposure of their lives.

Among the most important operations which rendered the



blockade effective, were those connected with the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing. The number of men to be supplied by this bureau was equal to a large army. At the close of the war there were fifty-one thousand five hundred men in active service, who received their supplies from this Department of the Navy, besides sixteen thousand eight hundred artisans and laborers on shore, in all sixty-eight thousand three hundred. The health and comfort of this vast multitude on ship and on shore depended materially upon the proper conduct of this bureau, and its importance and the grave responsibilities of its head may be readily understood. The duties of this office would have been arduous, without the addition of the blockading service; but when hundreds of ships were demanded for this special work, when whole squadrons were to be kept constantly at sea, and therefore to be continually supplied at disadvantage, the labor was at once onerous and perplexing. Through this bureau the Secretary made use of a new feature in naval war, one which the introduction of the steam navy alone has rendered possible, and which served to mitigate the hardships and sufferings that are inseparable from war.

The Sanitary and Christian Commissions, so justly praised as among the noblest conceptions of the age, exhibiting both the heroism and tenderness of the Christian spirit, bringing even to the battle-field some of the comforts of home and the consolations of religion, were imitated on the sea, so far as circumstances would permit. As soon as the system for the blockade was perfected, and the squadrons were at their stations, a regular line of steam communication was established between each fleet and the Northern ports, so that all were statedly reached, and in due order and time. The cargoes of these supply-steamers were not confined to munitions of war, nor to the salt provisions to which the crews of our ships are commonly restricted, but arrangements were made by which our seamen were supplied with many of the comforts and even some of the luxuries of the shore and home. These vessels, through the thoughtful care of the Department, were prepared to take out to the blockading squadrons fresh meats, vegetables, ice, and delicacies of various kinds for the sick; and this attention to their wants, and provision for their comforts, not only promoted the health of

the seamen, but gave them great satisfaction, so that their severe duties were performed with cheerfulness and alacrity. These regular visits to the squadrons afforded the means of frequent communications with friends at home; and the interchange of letters, and little tokens of remembering love, were so many links in the chain of affection which bound the absent still to those who were left behind. No one can estimate aright the moral influence which was exerted upon our seamen and officers by this regular intercourse kept up with those from whom they were separated; while the comforts and luxuries which were thus supplied to the sick relieved a large amount of suffering. The arrival of each supply-ship with its stores of fresh meats, fresh vegetables, canned fruits, its books, and its letters from the dear ones at home, made ever a glad day throughout the fleet, the memory of which lasted till the next steamer came.

Horatio Bridge, the chief of this Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, is the same officer who, on the memorable Sunday mentioned in a previous chapter, was sent to the Northern cities after the meeting at the Navy Department, to arrange for the immediate purchase of ships, and who was compelled to go over the Alleghanies and around by Wheeling before he could pass the rebel lines. The officers and crews of the blockading squadrons, and indeed those also engaged in other service, were under great obligations for the manner in which this well-conceived system of supplies was carried out by this efficient officer. The following paper was furnished by request, and presents some interesting details. The compliment to the chief of the bureau is well deserved:

The supply of food for a navy so rapidly increased and for so novel a duty as that of blockading, during the rebellion, forms an interesting chapter in its history. When the blockade of the long line of Southern coast was established, it became necessary to make arrangements to furnish the blockading vessels with provisions and other supplies in such a way as to keep them at their posts with as little interruption as possible. New depots of provisions and clothing were established, as soon as it was practicable, at Key West, Port Royal, Beaufort, New Orleans, and Newbern, while the old depots at Norfolk and Pensacola were reestablished as soon as retaken from the rebels. Though the vessels were

widely scattered, yet all were thus brought within easy reach of the necessary supplies of such kinds as could be kept on shore. Provisions were sent them from these depots in tugs and schooners, and the blockaders rarely left their posts except for coal or for repairs. Though the ration of the United States Navy, as established by law, is superior in quality to that of any other navy, it was still necessary that vessels stationed for years on a hostile coast should be supplied with fresh meat, vegetables, and other anti-scorbutic food in some effectual manner, and a system hitherto untried in the naval service was inaugurated by the Navy Department, and most successfully conducted, through the agency of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing. Large fast steamers were provided and fitted with capacious ice-houses, some of which would hold 50,000 pounds of fresh beef, and contain sufficient ice (300 tons or more) to preserve it for many weeks. In these ice-houses quarters of fresh beef of the best quality were carefully packed. The vessels also carried large quantities of vegetables, such as potatoes, onions, tomatoes, turnips, etc., and even large quantities of apples were shipped in their season. The largest of these steamers were the Connecticut, 1,800 tons, and the Rhode Island of 1,517, and at various times there were others of less capacity employed. By these steamers mails and passengers were sent out and brought home, and they ran almost with the regularity of steam-packets between the blockading squadrons and the ports of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, communicating with every vessel of the squadrons visited. Each of these blockading vessels was provided with an ice-chest, in which could be preserved, for a few days, its allotted share of fresh beef and ice. The arrival of the supply-vessel with its stores, mail, and passengers made a very welcome break in the monotony of blockading duty. The quantities and value of some of the articles thus sent, during the rebellion, to the Atlantic and Gulf squadrons, are shown in the following table:

		VALUE.
Fresh Beef.....	3,621,811 lbs.	\$463,320.95
Potatoes.....	87,714 bbls.	321,175.70
Onions.....	14,736 "	72,196.63
Turnips.....	1,381 "	2,668.50
Beets.....	366 "	746.25
Cabbages.....	615 "	2,132.50
Carrots.....	269 "	447.50
Apples.....	3,923 "	14,975.00
Canned Tomatoes.....	778,010 lbs.	64,394.78
Cabbage in Curry.....	54,670 "	7,653.80
Ice.....	14,853 tons.	113,448.61
		<hr/> \$1,063,160.22

To these regular and unremitted supplies may, in a great measure, be attributed the excellent health and the efficient condition of the *personnel* of the Navy, though stationed so long to guard an insalubrious coast. It is safe to say that, during the four years of blockade, scurvy was almost unknown in our squadrons. With some modifications, but with equally beneficial results, the same system was pursued in the Mississippi squadron. The result of the exertions of the Department in this regard was most creditable to it, and especially to Paymaster Horatio Bridge, chief of the Bureau of Provisions and Clothing, to whose intelligent industry and practical knowledge the country is indebted for the management of the difficult task of supplying so many ships with food and clothing suited to their new requirements.

There was another department of the Navy, upon the skilful management of which the success of the blockade very much depended, and this was the Bureau of Construction and Repairs. Nor was its importance confined to the blockading squadrons, for in the rapid creation of our Navy a very large share of the burden was necessarily laid upon the officer who superintended the construction and repairs of the ships. The Secretary was very fortunate in securing the advice and assistance of one in this bureau who was fully equal to the discharge of all its duties. John Lenthall was appointed to this position in 1853, and had therefore a large experience in the duties of his office when the war began. He has earned the reputation of being one of the foremost naval constructors in the world, and that man need not be anxious in regard to his fame who was the chief of the Bureau of Construction during the creation of the new American Navy.

If any one wishes to form an idea of the capacity requisite for the proper performance of the duties of such an office, let him measure, if he can, the calculations which are to be made, the contracts to be entered into, the materials to be procured, the responsibilities to be assumed, in the construction of a single man-of-war, and then multiply this by the number of new ships built during the war, and add to this his portion of the advice and responsibility in regard to vessels purchased and the repairs needed on more than six hundred ships. These repairs were of course more numerous on board the merchant steamers purchased and armed for the blockade service than on the vessels

of the regular Navy, for these last were more staunchly built. Unless, therefore, this repairing could be well and speedily done, the blockading fleets would be so weakened as to impair the validity of the blockade itself.

When, therefore, we consider that it was through the efficiency of this bureau that the Department was enabled to accomplish what England called the great fact of the war, its importance is more readily seen. If new ships were wanted, Mr. Lenthall was expected to produce them in due time and in perfect order; and into his hands were committed the war-ships bruised and shattered in their battles with forts and earthwork batteries; and the weaker blockaders, which had been too severely handled by the storms on the coast, were expected to come forth bearing few or no traces of their injuries. The excellent condition of our ships was of course largely due to the Bureau of Construction and Repairs.

Scarcely less important, as parts of the system by which the blockade was maintained, and the war in general conducted, were the other bureaus of the Department. In July, 1862, a law was passed reorganizing the several bureaus, and three new ones were created, the Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting, of Steam Engineering, and of Navigation. Previous to this act, these duties had been divided among the bureaus previously existing. Rear-Admiral Foote was appointed chief of the new Bureau of Equipment and Recruiting on July 22, 1862. He held the office until June 4, 1863, when Commander A. N. Smith was appointed to succeed him. Rear-Admiral Charles H. Davis was appointed head of the Bureau of Navigation July 22, 1862, and was succeeded by Commodore Thornton A. Jenkins, August 24, 1865. The chief of the Bureau of Steam Engineering was Benjamin F. Isherwood, so widely known in connection with marine engines, and the Bureau of Yards and Docks was conducted by Rear-Admiral Joseph Smith. Mention should also be made of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, which was presided over by Surgeon William Whelan, until his death in 1865, and from July 1, 1865, by Surgeon Phineas J. Horwitz. Through the system of regular communication established by the Department with the several squadrons, this bureau was enabled not only to discharge the usual surgical and medical duties, but it performed

a work with the blockading vessels similar to that of the Sanitary Commission in the Army; and its care and labor in this respect contributed largely to the preservation of the health of the crews in the several duties of the blockading service.

This glance at the bureaus shows the extent and character of the executive machinery by which the plans of the Secretary were carried out; and the efficiency of the Department was due, in a great degree, to the harmony with which these subordinate but important officers united their efforts for the common end.

The Secretary of the Navy has taken occasion, in his several "Reports," to make a generous and graceful acknowledgment of his obligations to the gentlemen through whose coöperation his administration became a triumphant success. The following is an extract from his Report of December, 1861: "In concluding this report, it gives me pleasure to acknowledge the important aid I have received, in the administration of the Department, from the zealous and very efficient coöperation of the Assistant Secretary, and the clerical force of the Department proper, and from the chiefs of the several bureaus and those performing public duty under their immediate superintendence and direction."

In the Report of 1862, the Secretary used the following language: "If what I have written shall be considered as attesting in any degree the foresight and energy of this Department, then I request that a generous measure of approbation may be awarded to those by whom I have been officially aided. I esteem myself and the country fortunate in the selection of those who have been associated with me in administering the duties of this Department. In the Assistant Secretary I have ever found an able, earnest, and efficient coadjutor. And it gives me pleasure to acknowledge the aid which I have at all times received from the energy, experience, and wise counsel of the several chiefs of bureaus in my administration of naval affairs, and which have been of the highest value to the service and the country."

It is alike honorable to the Secretary, and those associated with him, that he felt it both a duty and a pleasure to express similar sentiments of regard and confidence in each succeeding report down to the close of the war. Such were the forces by which the blockade, the "great fact" of the war, in the opinion

of Englishmen, was established and so maintained, that its validity could not be questioned, and English skill and capital abandoned at length the attempt to penetrate its lines. It was natural and proper that the Secretary should feel some degree of pride as well as pleasure at the successful accomplishment of this great work.

On the 10th of March, 1861, the Government had only forty-two vessels in commission, and two hundred and seven men in all the forts and receiving-ships on the Atlantic coast, to man new ships and protect the navy-yards and depots. In April, 1861, with this force partly at command, our entire coast from the Chesapeake to the Rio Grande was declared to be under blockade, a declaration which Europe met with a sneer.

In December, 1862, the Secretary reported 427 vessels in commission, of which 123 had been constructed. In December, 1863, the number was 588; and in December, 1864, 671. Of these, our swiftest new sloops-of-war and smaller gunboats, and the fastest of the steamers purchased, were assigned to the duties of the blockade. They were divided into four squadrons: the North Atlantic, the South Atlantic, the Eastern Gulf Squadron, and the Western Gulf Squadron. No degree of vigilance or activity was at first sufficient to prevent a considerable trade with the rebels. It was not found practicable to close the harbor of Charleston until our iron-clads were brought within the bar, and, to the last, some few smugglers were able to reach Wilmington occasionally; but each month added to the experience of our cruisers, and, consequently, to their success.

The shallow waters of the Southern coast, and the countless inlets and inner channels, gave great facilities for a coastwise traffic, which was very difficult for our vessels to reach; and yet the report of the captures made shows how completely this trade must have been cut up. In the Secretary's Report of 1863, the whole number of captures, up to the first of November of that year, is stated to be 1,045, classified as follows: schooners, 547; steamers, 179; sloops, 117; brigs, 30; barks, 26; ships, 15; yachts and boats, 117. A large proportion of these, of course, were coastwise traders.

The pursuit of these small vessels excited no unusual interest, and they seldom proved very valuable prizes, though the

great number taken produced in the aggregate a large sum for the Government and the captors. But the chase of one of the English steamers was an entirely different affair. On such an occasion the ship was one scene of intense excitement, from the commanding officer to the cooks and powder-boys. Every feeling which can prompt to utmost effort was fully roused. There was hot indignation against England for her ungenerous and hostile course, and an intense desire for revenge, which was not cherished toward the rebels themselves. The hope of gain was strongly stimulated, for it was known that these neutral traders were all richly laden. There was national rivalry in regard to the speed of the vessels, for these blockade-runners were the swiftest steamers that England could produce; and to overhaul one of them, therefore, was a triumph for American naval architecture and seamanship, and there was, on every trial, deep interest felt in the range and accuracy of our new rifled guns. To intercept and cut off one of these swift and almost invisible steamers was one of the most difficult tasks ever undertaken by our seamen.

There was national pride and ill-will with the Englishmen, as well as on our part; and this, with the probability at the first of immense profits, stimulated them to make full use of all their resources and faculties. Nothing was left undone which promised to increase the chances of success. Money was lavished freely upon the vessels and their equipments, for merchants and shipbuilders thought themselves certain of a rich return until they had made some very discouraging experiments. They built on the Clyde a new class of steamers designed for this particular work; and it was claimed that some of these, on their trial-trips in the smooth water of that river, made twenty miles per hour. However this may have been, they certainly were the best and fastest boats that British money and workmen could construct; and it was not believed that one of them could be overtaken by any Yankee ship afloat. The greatest possible pains were taken to enable them to evade the blockading fleet. They were very long, low in the water, and quite narrow, and were painted a dull, neutral color, which rendered it very difficult to distinguish them, at a little distance, from the water or the sky. They generally



burned a coal that emitted no visible smoke or flame; and, approaching the coast in the night, they endeavored to pass the blockading squadron silently, and then, in the gray of the morning, run in close to the shore and under shelter of the guns of a fort.

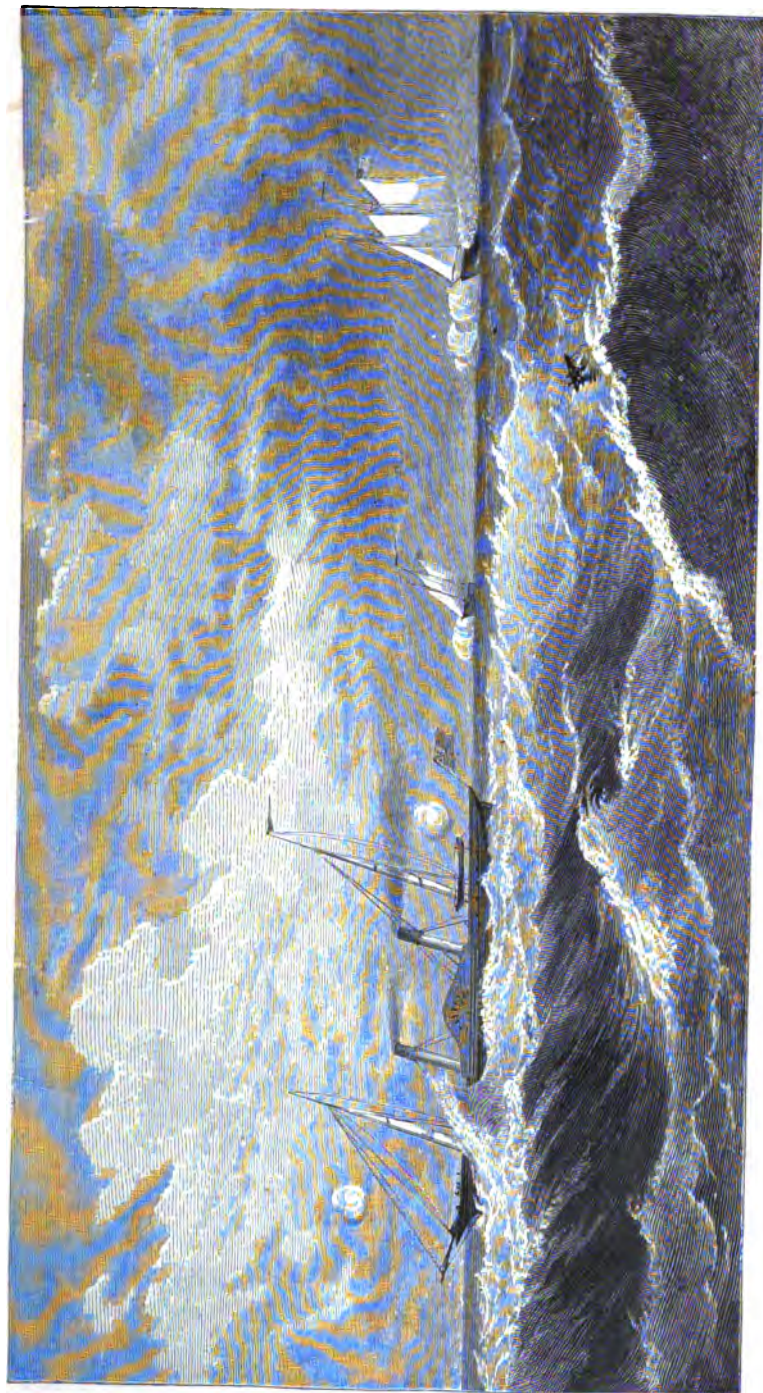
Very often, however, they were foiled in their best-laid plans. The morning light would sometimes reveal them gliding along shore, but so far from the protecting fort or entrance to the harbor that a watchful blockader would head them off or bring them within range of the rifle, and then the officers would generally run their vessel ashore, set her on fire, and escape in their boats. The beach in the neighborhood of Wilmington seemed, at one time, lined with these wrecks.

Although it would be unprofitable to present, even if it could be done, a consecutive narrative devoted exclusively to the operations of the blockading squadrons; yet, in justice to the officers and men who performed this important work, enough of detail should be given to illustrate the general character of their labors. It must be remembered also that vessels were constantly detached from blockade duty for other purposes, and the story of the blockade cannot therefore be easily separated from the general operations of the war. The only practicable method of exhibiting the work of the blockade will be to present the operations of each of the blockading squadrons from year to year, and leave the reader to judge for himself how much of all the work belongs exclusively to the blockading service. The most interesting incidents connected with the capture of blockade-runners will thus appear in their appropriate places.

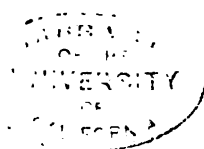
A separate account of the capture of each one of more than fifteen hundred vessels, many of them small, will not of course be expected; and yet those engaged in seizing them will, doubtless, be disappointed at the omission of many things which at the time were exceedingly interesting to them. Such must remember that the historian is dependent almost entirely upon others for information, and that, if he would write a truthful history and not a romance, he must rely mainly upon official documents, adding to this what may be obtained from reliable witnesses of the scenes of the events described. The miscalled histories, which are mainly compiled from the over-wrought statements written







GUNBOATS CHASING A BLOCKADE-RUNNER.



to create a sensation at the time, serve only to mislead, for many of these narratives were produced under the pressure of strong competition in furnishing startling news and readable narratives. Every writer of history regrets that the actual scenes cannot be reproduced, except in their main features, because no records have been preserved of the lesser incidents, so interesting to those present, and which would be almost equally so to others if they could only be known. Nor is it easy to obtain these incidents from those who were present. There is a proper sensitiveness felt by high-minded men in regard to volunteering accounts of events in which they were prominent actors, and this is well illustrated by a fact stated by Mr. James, while preparing his naval history. He published circulars requesting information from the officers of the Navy in regard to affairs in which they had participated, and he received but half a dozen letters in reply. A certain delicacy on such matters is doubtless commendable, and yet public men might well consider that their public actions become, in an important sense, the property of their country; and, in view of the influence of example, it may be as important that a record should be made of an heroic action as that the deed should be done. Very often that record cannot be made except by the actors themselves, and, if omitted by them, the loss can in no manner be supplied. For the want of such records of minute things, the truth of history has suffered, and its value has been greatly lessened; for the historian, weary himself of presenting a mere skeleton of main facts, and knowing that it will equally fatigue and perhaps disgust the reader, is tempted to fill in the outlines of the picture with details supplied by his own fancy.

The operations of the Potomac flotilla, already described in part in the first volume, may perhaps be regarded as the beginning of the blockade, inasmuch as the river communications and trade were so important to the rebels, and because the first pressure which they felt upon their resources was caused by the cutting up of this internal traffic, and the supplies sent forward by their traitorous friends at the North. To extend what might be termed the "*internal blockade*" of the rivers and sounds, was the object of the expeditions against the Hatteras forts and the fortifications of the North Carolina sounds, which have been

already described. As we had at first so few vessels which could be used for blockade duty in the open sea, the captures for the first few months were mainly of the small traders of the coast, but these were very numerous. Gradually these seizures extended to ships coming from foreign ports: and, when England was fully prepared for her grand experiment in contraband traffic, the scene soon reached the height of its interest.

As has been stated, the work of the blockading ships often cannot be separated from other operations. In the first volume, the narrative of the fighting along the Atlantic coast was carried down to the fall of Pulaski and Fort Clinch, and the re-occupation of Northern Florida. In order to obtain a proper starting-point for the history of the blockade south of the Potomac, it is necessary to give some attention to the doings of the Navy both in connection with the movements of the Army and the blockade of James River and the adjacent waters.

Early in May, 1861, the siege of Yorktown by General McClellan, with the Army of the Potomac, was terminated by the marching of the few thousand rebels who formed the garrison up the peninsula; and on the 5th of May, Commander Smith, of the steamer Wachusett, received a dispatch from General McClellan, saying, "Yorktown is in our possession; please come up and help us in communicating with Gloucester;" and requesting that boats be sent up York River to reconnoitre and seize schooners. The squadron was immediately got under way and proceeded up the river, but the supposed schooners were not found; some small craft and a launch were the only captures made by the expedition.

As the Merrimack was not then destroyed, no important movements could be undertaken on the James River while she was left behind, and therefore the Monitor and other vessels remained at Hampton Roads to watch the rebel iron-clad and prevent her, should she again venture out, from doing further injury to our fleet, or from going out to sea. It was also proposed to assail her in a different manner, should it be found practicable. Much interest had been excited by statements in regard to the penetrating power of bodies moving at high velocities, and it was believed that a wooden vessel having great speed might cut asunder, or at least crush, even an iron-clad.

For this purpose the Baltimore, an unarmed steamer of light draught and high speed, was procured and held in readiness to run into the mailed frigate should she leave her harbor.

If we may judge from the result of a similar experiment subsequently made in Mobile Bay, where some of our heaviest sloops, strongly built, were badly shattered by an attempt to run down the Tennessee, it was probably fortunate for the Baltimore that she had no opportunity of dashing herself against the Merrimack. Some philosopher has said that it is conceivable that a cobweb should have sufficient velocity to cut asunder the globe; *practically*, however, it would be found very difficult to give an egg a velocity that would send it through a four-inch iron-plate.

On the 8th of May the Merrimack came out from Norfolk, or Sewall Point, but as the Monitor was kept well in advance of the other vessels, the frigate, warned by her former experience, did not venture to attack; and thus, whether seriously injured or not, she confessed herself conquered by the Monitor, and the broadside idea succumbed there, and probably forever, to that of the turreted ship. This confession became very emphatic three days after, when the formidable iron-clad was blown up by the rebels themselves. With the destruction of the Merrimack, the possibility of creating a rebel navy was ended. Soon after the Merrimack was blown up, as our fleet could then safely proceed up the James River, it was determined to make a naval attack upon Drury's Bluff with our iron-clads, the Monitor, the broadside corvette Galena, and the little Naugatuck, constructed by Mr. Stevens, of Hoboken. On the 15th of May, these iron-clads, with the Aroostook and the Port Royal, moved up the river to within eight miles of Richmond. On this bluff was the fort afterward known as Fort Darling. There were likewise two separate barriers across the river, formed of piles, sailing-vessels, and steamboats. The banks were also lined with rifle-pits that sheltered sharpshooters. The fort itself was found to be more formidable than had been supposed; it was situated so high above the water that our shot could not reach it at short range; and the attack, unsuccessful in all respects, was a disastrous one for the Galena.

At 7.45 A. M. the Galena anchored at somewhat less than



one thousand yards from this fort, and opened fire with her broadside to the battery. The Monitor passed beyond the Galena, but, finding that her guns could not be elevated so as to bear upon the fort, dropped down and anchored near the Galena. The wooden vessels took their positions about thirteen hundred yards below. The attack was continued until five minutes after 11, when, the Galena having expended her ammunition, the signal was made to withdraw. The Galena was very roughly handled. The three-inch iron plates which formed her armor proved a very insufficient protection against modern artillery. The ten-inch shot from the fort crashed through her sides, shattered her timbers, and slaughtered her crew. Her sides were pierced thirteen times by shot and shell, and she was so completely cut up, and her worthlessness as an iron-clad so clearly shown, that her armor was subsequently taken off, and she was, after repairs, employed as an ordinary wooden corvette. Her decks were a human slaughter-house. Of her small crew, thirteen were killed and eleven wounded.

The following is the official report of this second trial of our iron-clads, by Commander John Rodgers, and to this is added the report of the executive officer of the Galena, L. H. Newman, which will show the condition of the ship after the action :

UNITED STATES STEAMER GALENA, }  
OFF CITY POINT, JAMES RIVER, May 16, 1862. }

SIR : I have the honor to report that this vessel, the Aroostook, the Monitor, and Port Royal, with the Naugatuck, moved up the river yesterday, getting aground several times, but meeting no artificial impediments until we arrived at Ward's Bluff, about eight miles from Richmond, where we encountered a heavy battery and two separate barriers, formed of piles, steamboats, and sailing vessels. The pilots both say that they saw the Jamestown and Yorktown among the number. The banks of the river we found lined with rifle-pits, from which sharpshooters annoyed the men at the guns. These would hinder all removal of obstructions, unless driven away by a land force.

The Galena ran within almost six hundred yards of the battery, as near the piles as it was deemed proper to go, let go her anchor, and with a spring swung across the stream, not more than twice as wide as the ship is long. Then, at 7.45 A. M., opened fire upon the battery.

The wooden vessels, as directed, anchored about thirteen hundred

yards below. The Monitor anchored near, and at 9 o'clock she passed just above the Galena, but found that her guns could not be elevated enough to reach the battery. She then dropped a little below us, and made her shots effective.

At 11.5 A. M. the Galena had expended nearly all her ammunition, and I made signal to discontinue the action. We had but six Parrott charges, and not a single filled 9-inch shell. We had thirteen killed and eleven wounded.

The rifled 100-pounder Parrott of the Naugatuck burst, half of the part abaft the trunnions going overboard. She is therefore disabled.

The Galena and Monitor can, with a supply of ammunition, silence the battery at Hardin's Bluff. The result of our experiment with the Galena I enclose. We demonstrated that she is not shot-proof. Balls came through, and many men were killed with fragments of her own iron. One fairly penetrated just above the water-line, and exploded in the steerage. The greater part of the balls, however, at the water-line, after breaking the iron, stuck in the wood. The port side is much injured—knees, planks, and timbers started. No shot penetrated the spar-deck, but in three places are large holes—one of them a yard long and about eight inches wide, made by a shot which, in glancing, completely broke through the deck, killing several men with fragments of the deck-plating. The Galena should be repaired before sending her to sea. I would suggest the Washington navy-yard, since so many people there have an interest in iron-plating, and she so well shows the effect of various shot. No gun is disabled, but we need ammunition.

On James River an army can be landed within ten miles of Richmond, on either bank. We command City Point, and are ready to co-operate with a land force in an advance upon Petersburg. In going up James River, above this point, it will be desirable to protect the crew from sharpshooters upon the river. They annoyed us. To command important points, and prevent the reoccupation of old Fort Powhatan, at Hood's, more vessels are needed. Some should continually pass up and down the river to prevent the erection of new batteries.

I cannot too highly commend the cool courage of the officers and crew. Lieutenant Newman, the executive officer, was conspicuous for his gallant and effective services. Mr. Washburne, acting master, behaved admirably. These are selected from among the number.

The Aroostook, Port Royal, and Naugatuck, took the stations previously assigned them, and did every thing that was possible. The Monitor could not have done better. The barrier is such that vessels

of the enemy, even if they had any, probably cannot pass out; ours cannot pass in.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

JOHN RODGERS, *Commander U. S. Navy.*

*Flag-Officer L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH,*

*Commanding North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.*

UNITED STATES STEAMER GALENA, }  
OFF CITY POINT, JAMES RIVER, May 16, 1862. }

SIR: In obedience to your order of this day, I have the honor to submit the following report of the condition of this ship's hull:

On the port side her bulwarks, between ports Nos. 5 and 6, are started in about an inch, and the timbers broken. Thirteen shot and shell have perforated her side, splintering considerably. Forward of No. 1 port the bulwarks are badly shattered. Several hanging knees are started off from side and spar-deck beams; many seams are opened in the side, and the gun-deck, beneath the guns, will require caulking.

In forward room of wardroom the hanging knee is started about two and a half inches, and the side injured. In forward part of steerage a shell perforated the side and started the hanging knee about two inches. In after-room a diagonal knee is slightly started, and the air-port stove in. In the coal-bunkers the side is also injured.

On spar-deck several glancing shot have made indentations in the iron plates and broken deck planks; in two instances, apertures about eighteen inches by four inches have been made. The hammock-netting is shattered; the wheel is injured, one boat davit gone, and several awning and rail stanchions. The armor is started from the stem, also at the junction of the bars on the stem, and on the starboard quarter, near port No. 8.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. H. NEWMAN, *Executive Officer.*

*Commander JOHN RODGERS,*

*Commanding U. S. Naval Forces in James River.*

This action was important to the country as a guide in regard to the character of vessels needed to resist the fire of heavy artillery, and prevented, no doubt, a large outlay for broadside iron-clads that would have proven in battle as useless as the Galena. It demonstrated that if broadside-vessels are to be used, they must be much more heavily armored than was this corvette. It proved, moreover, in the most satisfactory manner,

the resisting power of the Ericsson turreted ship and the difficulty of striking a vessel presenting so small a surface to an enemy's guns. The Monitor and the Galena fought this fort at the same distance. The Galena was a small vessel, of less tonnage than the Monitor, and yet this small broadside ship was literally riddled with shot; while the Monitor was struck only three times, once on the turret and twice on the side-armor, by solid shot, which did her no damage, and not a single man of her crew was injured. This result fully justified the Navy Department in giving its chief attention to the construction of Monitor vessels, while the New Ironsides frigate was so armored as to be a formidable and most valuable ship. The following is the report of the officer commanding the Monitor in the action:

• UNITED STATES IRON-CLAD STEAMER MONITOR, }  
JAMES RIVER, VA., May 16, 1862. }

SIR: I submit the following report of the movements of this vessel during the action of yesterday:

Shortly after weighing anchor from our position near Kingsland Creek, a sharp fire of musketry was commenced from both banks on all the ships.

At half-past seven I discovered an extensive fortification on an elevation of about two hundred feet, with several smaller batteries, all apparently mounting guns of the heaviest calibre; at the foot of the bluff in the river an obstruction, formed of sunken steamers and vessels, secured with chains, and the shallow water piled across the river.

The Galena, having anchored at about one thousand yards from the fort, and being warmly engaged, I endeavored to pass ahead of her to take off some of the fire, but found that my guns could not be elevated sufficiently to point at the fort. I then took position on the line with the Galena, and maintained a deliberate fire until the close of the action, when, in company with the other vessels, I dropped down to the anchorage of the morning.

The fire of the enemy was remarkably well-directed, but vainly, toward this vessel. She was struck three times—one solid 8-inch shot square on the turret, two solid shot on the side-armor forward of the pilot-house. Neither caused any damage beyond bending the plates. I am happy to report no casualties.

In conclusion, permit me to say that the action was most gallantly fought against great odds, and with the usual effect against earthworks.

So long as our vessels kept up a rapid fire they rarely fired in return; but the moment our fire slackened, they remanned their guns. It was impossible to reduce such works, except with the aid of a land force.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM N. JEFFERS, *Lieutenant commanding.*

*Commander JOHN RODGERS, commanding James River Flotilla.*

Among the many expeditions up and down the York and James Rivers, the following are selected as illustrating the nature of the daily service of the Navy in those waters:

U. S. STEAMER SEBAGO, WHITE HOUSE, VA., May 18, 1862.

FLAG-OFFICER: Yesterday morning I took the Currituck, Acting-Master Shankland, and accompanied by a small transport steamer, the Seth Low, having on board two companies of infantry and a company of sharpshooters, under the command of Major Willard, two Parrott guns from Ayres's battery, prepared to be used from the bow or the stern of the vessel, and a detachment under Captain Ayres.

With this force we pushed through the obstructions at the burnt bridge, and ascended the Pamunkey River in pursuit of the enemy's transports. We encountered many difficulties, such as sunken vessels, trees felled across the river, etc., but no batteries. As we neared a place called Bassett's Landing, about twenty-five miles above the White House, we saw the evidence of a conflagration in advance, and heard from the negroes along the banks that the enemy, getting wind of our approach, had returned on board the vessels such stores as he had landed and was unable to take away, and fired his fleet.

About a mile from the burning vessels we met with an impenetrable obstruction. A schooner laden with stone was sunk across the stream, and the river had become so narrow that either end of her was wedged by the trees.

Major Willard landed here with his force of infantry and sharpshooters, and marched up the left (east) bank, that the number and class of vessels burned might be known. This must have been a severe blow to the enemy, who had commenced landing his stores. Evidences of a hurried departure were manifest. Shovels, picks, and other implements with which they had been levelling the bank were strewn about. The number of vessels burned was (as near as their burning hulks could be counted) seventeen, viz., one large side-wheel steamboat (the Logan), one propeller, and fifteen schooners.

We were compelled to return stern foremost for several miles before

we had room in the river to turn. Lieutenant-Commanding Somerville Nicholson accompanied us on this expedition, the results of which I hope will be satisfactory to you. The enemy appeared on several occasions, but at a considerable distance, which, without loss of time, they increased. We returned at nightfall, without accident.

Acting-Master Shankland handled his vessel with admirable skill, and her rescue from many positions of embarrassment is due to his seamanship. To Lieutenant-Commanding S. Nicholson, who volunteered his services on this occasion, and was so eminently useful in sounding through the obstructions in advance of the vessel, special thanks are due.

The steamer *Seth Low*, with the commands of Major Willard and Captain Ayres on board, was more than useful; she was a necessity.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. MURRAY,

*Lieutenant commanding forces in York and Pamunkey Rivers.*  
Flag-Officer L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH,  
*commanding North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.*

May 31, 1862.

*To the Hon. Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.:*

SIR: I beg to forward these reports with regard to the very essential service afforded by our gunboats in York River, in assisting our army when attacked at West Point. They have but just come to hand.

Very respectfully, L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH, *Flag-Officer.*

U. S. STEAMER *WACHUSETT*, WEST POINT, YORK RIVER, May 12, 1862.

SIR: In my communication of the 1st instant I informed you that an attack had been made on that day on the left flank of our army, and that our vessels shelled the enemy's artillery, which were posted on a hill to the left, forcing them to retire very precipitately. This is all that we could see from the ship. I have since learned from some of the army officers engaged in the affair that the shelling from our ships was very destructive to the enemy, causing them to retreat so rapidly that they left many of their killed and wounded on the field. Indeed, many of them gave the credit of the victory or repulse to the ships; for without them, they say, our forces could not have withstood the attack, but would have been compelled to fall back on the camp. . . .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. SMITH, *commanding U. S. Steamer Wachusett.*

Flag-Officer L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH,  
*commanding N. A. Blockading Squadron, Hampton Roads, Va.*

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U. S. STEAMER WACHUSETT, CITY POINT, JAMES RIVER, May 29, 1862.

SIR: I forward, herewith, a copy of a report handed to me to-day by Lieutenant-Commanding T. H. Stevens, of the United States steamer Maratanza. At the time the attack referred to in the report was made by the rebel forces on General Franklin's division, this ship was anchored off the lower part of the landing. The Chocura was above, near the mouth of the Pamunkey; the Sebago was getting under way from the upper part of the anchorage, to accompany the Corwin up the Matapony; and the Maratanza and Marblehead were a short distance below, on their way from Queen's Creek; the latter aground, and the former assisting in getting her off. I made signals to the Currituck to go to the assistance of the Marblehead, and to the Sebago and Maratanza to take a position near this ship. The enemy were seen with field-pieces on a hillside, firing at our troops, who were hid from our sight by intervening woods. A few discharges of shell from the Wachusett, Maratanza, and Sebago, silenced the enemy, and drove them hastily from their position, saving our army, as I have understood through army officers, from total defeat.

It seems that the gunboats rendered a much more important service to the army than we on board were, at the time, aware of; and I only reported that an attack had been made on General Franklin's forces by the rebels, who were shelled by the gunboats and dispersed, as that was all that could be seen from this ship.

Had I known at the time the valuable services rendered by the gunboats I would have reported it, as a knowledge of it might have been of some advantage to us.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your ob't serv't,

W. SMITH, *commanding U. S. Steamer Wachusett.*

*Flag-Officer L. M. GOLDSBOROUGH,*

*commanding N. A. Blockading Squadron, Hampton Roads.*

U. S. STEAMER MARATANZA, OFF WEST POINT, VA., May 7, 1862.

SIR: About 11.15 this morning, hearing the sound of heavy firing in the rear of this place, I proceeded on board the Wachusett, for the purpose of finding means to join my command, which I had passed on my way to report to you, and to receive your instructions. About half past 11 o'clock General Franklin telegraphed for the assistance of the gunboats, stating that he was attacked by a large force of the enemy, and wanted immediate support. At this time the Maratanza was anchored about two and a half miles below, engaged in towing off the Marblehead.

Receiving your orders to go aboard the *Maratanza*, and bring that vessel into action, I proceeded at once in your gig for this purpose. Immediately upon getting on board, I weighed anchor, cleared for action, and when abreast of and as close to the position of the enemy as we could get, I opened fire with the 100-pounder Parrott; about which time the *Sebago* also opened. The fire was kept up for about three-quarters of an hour (this vessel remaining under way), with terrible and telling effect upon the enemy, whose fire soon began to slacken, and they commenced retreating. At 2.22 P. M. ceased firing and anchored.

It is the generally received opinion—so I gather from the officers and men composing General Franklin's command—that the accurate and destructive fire of the gunboats was greatly instrumental in saving the army from serious reverse and disaster. I found the use of the army signals, on this occasion, invaluable.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

T. H. STEVENS, *Lieutenant commanding.*

Commander WILLIAM SMITH,

*commanding U. S. Steamer Wachusett, Senior Officer present.*

U. S. STEAMER JACOB BELL, JAMES RIVER, June 21, 1862.

SIR: I respectfully submit the following:

Yesterday, in obedience to your orders, I proceeded with the dispatches up the river to the Monitor. On passing the Reed Bluff, known as Watkins's Bluff, I was opened upon by two field-batteries, three guns each; of 12-pounders and 6-pounders, and about five hundred sharpshooters.

The channel being very narrow, and, being obliged to go within a few feet of the bluff, I suffered severely. The hail of bullets from the sharpshooters prevented me for a time from responding, as, having no covering for my men at the battery, I would not expose them to the heavy fire. A shot, however, came and carried away my rudder-chain, and my vessel got ashore in front of the batteries. I was determined to go by, so manned my guns, steamed on, and forced her over. The field-batteries were so masked that I could not see them till opened upon, though the upper battery raked me as I headed toward it, which, from the nature of the river, I had to do; but we stood on, under their fire, for five minutes, which I considered better, as I had no idea of retreating until my duties were performed, and as long as my vessel lasted. As soon as I got up to the upper battery the lower battery raked me aft, doing more damage to my upper works than the other. I think I should not have been damaged so much had it not been for my getting



ashore in front of them, giving them but a few feet between me and their guns. The officers and men behaved with their accustomed coolness and efficiency, and promptly responded to the order "Man the battery," though under a heavy fire of musketry. A shot has penetrated the flange of the port-wheel, cracking it in several places. It will not do for me to be in any seaway, as I will lose my wheel. The starboard side of my pilot-house was carried away, together with two iron plates; in fact, my upper works are completely riddled. One shot struck the valve-stem, bending it, which sloughed us down, fortunately not stopping the engine.

As you ordered me to return after delivering the dispatches, I passed down again after night, but was not fired at. Ten shots in all struck the vessel, to say nothing of the quantity of rifle-bullets in the wood-work. .

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. P. McCREA, *Lieutenant commanding.*

*Commander* JOHN P. GILLIS,

*commanding Naval Forces, James River, Va.*

P. S.—I am thankful to say not one on board was injured. The battery was a *flying battery of artillery*, and, as I afterward learned, was limbered up and moved off, which accounts for my not being fired upon coming down.

E. P. McC.

In services such as are enumerated in these letters, the vessels on these rivers were constantly engaged; and to this must be added the constant patrol by night as well as by day, to cut off communications and intercept the supplies of all sorts, and the mails forwarded by Northern friends of the rebellion and by the secret agents of the South who were scattered through all the Northern cities. These were sent in large quantities across the rivers, and up and down them in small boats; and to watch and seize them required a sleepless vigilance and incessant fatigue. If, to what has already been stated, there is here added the work of the Potomac flotilla in the early part of 1862, it will complete the history of the operations upon the Atlantic coast from the Chesapeake to Florida, and from the commencement of the war to the summer of 1862.

The Potomac flotilla service offered very little to those engaged in it but severe labor, sleepless watchfulness, discomfort, and fatigue, with little of glory or pecuniary reward; and yet it was, for reasons already given, by no means an unimportant

part of the blockade and the general conduct of the war, connected as it was with the only water-way to Washington, and with the operations of the Army of the Potomac. Its battles were on a small scale, but the exposure was often as great as in more brilliant ones.

Early in January, 1862, a very gallant and successful attack was made on the rebel battery at Cockpit Point, by the steamers *Anacostia*, Lieutenant-Commanding Badger, and the *Yankee*, Lieutenant-Commanding Eastman. This was done by order of Lieutenant R. H. Wyman, then commanding the Potomac flotilla. He believed that the enemy's battery at that point could be reached by an enfilading fire, and he therefore directed the steamers to stand inside of Cockpit Point and make the experiment.

In this attempt the steamers were entirely successful; their shells, directed with great accuracy, fell and exploded exactly within the battery. Of course, this threw the rebels into great confusion, and the guns on the extreme point were hastily abandoned. They had now but a single large gun, an 80-pounder rifle, which could be brought to bear upon the attacking steamers. A shot from this gun passed through the port-bow of the *Yankee* and lodged in a berth in the fore-castle, doing no other damage except to wound one of the seamen slightly. A few moments after, a shell from the *Anacostia*, and another from the *Yankee*, exploded, almost simultaneously with the flash, right under this gun, by which its carriage was overturned, and the gun dismounted. The rebels were compelled to abandon their battery. It was, however, manned again soon after, and the dismounted rifle was moved to the north face to prevent another attack from the same quarter.

Early in March, however, these batteries and others along the Potomac were abandoned, and the rebels apparently gave up all hope of seriously obstructing the river; and probably for the last time, while the republic continues, a hostile gun was then seen upon its banks. The following is Lieutenant Wyman's report of the abandonment of these batteries:

POTOMAC FLOTILLA, *March 11, 1862.*

SIR: Having received information on the 9th instant that the enemy were abandoning the line of the Potomac, after making a reconnoissance,

I directed the schooner *Anacostia*, Lieutenant-Commanding Badger, to shell the Cockpit battery, and found it deserted. Small parties were then landed from the *Yankee* and *Anacostia*. Our flag was raised over the works, and the guns (which were not spiked) spiked. On the 10th, with the assistance of a regiment from General Hooker's division, the guns at Cockpit were thrown over the embankment, the gun back of Evansport disabled, and some of the ammunition removed. Immediately on the enemy's discovering that we were aware of their evacuation, they fired every thing at the Evansport batteries. Many of their magazines were blown up; the landing-parties saved some by removing the slow-matches and trains of powder. The gun-carriages were fired and rendered useless. The guns, some loaded for bursting, exploded as they became heated, dismounting many; but those which have burst appear to me to have burst some time since. Very large quantities of shot and shell have been found in the magazines. The enemy appear to have been entirely deficient in means of transportation; many tents, camp fixtures, and clothes were left.

Their batteries are of a much more formidable nature than I had supposed, and great labor has been expended in their construction. The country round is lined with rifle-pits, and breastworks thrown up (but no guns mounted) on a hill, back, commanding the rear of the Shipping-Point batteries. The guns are of the best description, mostly United States guns; one an English rifle-gun. From the direction on the boxes of ammunition, I find that the Evansport batteries were commanded by Fredr. Chartard, formerly a commander in the United States Navy. The steamer *Page* was blown up and entirely destroyed.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. H. WYMAN, *Lieutenant commanding Potomac Flotilla.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

The following letters also give some interesting statements of the work on the Rappahannock:

U. S. STEAMER JACOB BELL, RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER, April 15, 1862.

SIR: Immediately upon the receipt of your telegram, "by order of the President," I proceeded at once to carry out the instructions therein contained.

The expedition was composed of the *Jacob Bell*, *Satellite*, *Island Bell*, *Resolute*, *Reliance*, and *Piedmontese*. The *Wyandank*, the vessel I depended on so much, being "double ended" and 9-inch guns, broke her crank on her trip from the navy-yard, so I was compelled to leave

without her. We entered the Rappahannock at 8.30 p. m., and anchored for the night at Carter's Creek, about 11.20 p. m.

I was anxious to obtain a pilot from the river, so I sent on shore a party of men, and surrounded several houses, hoping to secure one, but failed. Fortunately, Acting-Master Street, of this vessel, knew the river somewhat; so with his assistance and the charts, I concluded to go up as far as Tappahannock at least, if not to Fredericksburg.

From two brothers, named Lewis, found on St. George's Island, I learned the following: They left Fredericksburg two weeks ago. At that time there were thirty thousand troops back about two or three miles from Fredericksburg, but they were constantly moving southward; did not know how many now.

Fort Lowry was the only fort on the river; had five guns mounted. The St. Nicholas, Virginia, and Eureka, were in the river; no guns on them. (I have since learned the St. Nicholas had two.) They were drawing timber to build gunboats; they intended to sink a stone-boat in the channel about Fort Lowry. About four weeks ago forty Virginia volunteers were just below Fredericksburg, doing scout picket-duty. As many as three hundred refugees are in the woods trying to get across the Potomac, from thence to Maryland, to escape drafting. (I would here state that I have been applied to by several Unionists on the Virginia shore of the Potomac for protection, and allow vessels to load their stock and bring their families away.) At midnight I moved up to Urbana; at daylight we attempted to land, but were met by a volley of musketry from the enemy concealed in a rifle-pit, perforating the boat, but injuring no one. I spared the town, notwithstanding, seeing women and children hastening to and fro, but shelled the rifle-pits; I then moved on to the eastern "wharf C," but saw nothing; at meridian passed Fort Lowry, a circular fort, mounting five guns, but have heard they had eight or eleven, one heavy rifle-gun. On the hill, back about five hundred yards, new wooden barracks for five thousand men had just been finished, and in the rear of the fort, on the beach, quarters for three thousand more. I landed three boats' crews and destroyed all; found some muskets, blankets, and medicines. They evidently had left on our approach, as the hospital beds were left in a state as just vacated.

I went up then to Tappahannock. I fired a gun and hoisted a white flag, but seeing no boats for the authorities to come in, I went ashore with a flag of truce myself. I found only negroes on the beach, but sent for the authorities; three white men came down; I told them I would not damage their town, and to satisfy the women and aged to

that effect, but that I should take possession of the town until I left. I hoisted the American flag from the most prominent public building, the school-house.

I learned from these gentlemen, disloyal, but not secessionists, that there were about thirty thousand troops at Fredericksburg, but Dr. Gordon said about twenty thousand, and that they were constantly moving; one regiment was five miles this side of Fredericksburg. General Longstreet commanded the brigade at Fort Lowry. No troops within thirty miles, save the cavalry pickets from the company at Urbana. No gunboats building at Fredericksburg, they believed. I heard the troops from Fort Lowry moved away one week ago.

I could get no pilot, or I should have gone up farther. At this point the channel is two fathoms deep, crooked, and varies, and I could not devote the time to survey and pass up. I heard from a negro that five schooners were sunk in the channel seven miles this side of Fredericksburg.

There is no obstruction of any kind in the channel so far. Off Fort Lowry the light-ship is sunk, though her masts are visible still, a perfect mark in daytime. Tappahannock is fifty miles from Richmond, and the same from Fredericksburg by land; the latter seventy-five miles by water; troops can be landed here with perfect ease, but pilots must be had.

I laid off Tappahannock all night, hoping I might secure something passing down; at daylight I was rewarded by capturing a sloop from Fredericksburg with shad, oysters, and letters containing valuable information. . . . I immediately got under way and stood down the river. I had decided not to go to Fredericksburg, from the nature of the river. My vessels could have been sunk by rocks and stones from the banks, which are at least two hundred feet high, and I was advised not to go by a man at Tappahannock, who said he gave me the intelligence out of gratitude for sparing the town, as they thought I would destroy it as I had the barracks, etc., at Fort Lowry.

The men from the captured sloop gave way in their little boat as soon as they saw us, and landed on the starboard side of the river; they had too good a start for us to catch them.

I captured, coming down the river, two schooners from out a creek (Totousky Creek).

At Union Wharf I saw a lot of men; I made a hurried landing and captured two confederates belonging to Captain Jeffers's company and Hardin's, they were to go in camp to-morrow; they have been impressed, and would stand by the Union if they dared, so they say; being in uniform, I retained them as prisoners. At the store on the

said wharf I took all contraband articles, salt, coffee, etc., and scuttled the whiskey and rum; the feeling is Union, if they could be protected. At Heathsville there are ninety cavalry without arms or accoutrements, and are to go in camp to-morrow at 3 P. M.; two-thirds of them are impressed Unionists, and wish to be captured.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. P. McCREA, *Lieutenant commanding Expedition.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

FLOTILLA, POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK, *April 20, 1862.*

SIR: I arrived at Fredericksburg, Va., on Sunday, at 10 A. M., having met with no resistance on the river, and no hostile act, with the exception of a few shots fired by pickets. I found that Fredericksburg had been surrendered to the land forces of the United States on the day before, the rebels having destroyed the bridges, burned the two steamers Virginia and St. Nicholas, and about forty schooners belonging to private individuals, as also large quantities of corn and grain.

There is no obstruction on the Rappahannock River to within about seven miles of Fredericksburg; there, several schooners loaded with stone are sunk across the channel. On sounding, I found a channel to admit of the passage of two of the lighter steamers, with which I went on to the city. On a further examination of this channel, I find that most of the vessels of the flotilla could be taken past the "bulkhead" on high water.

There are two breastworks for guns thrown up on the right bank of the river—one at Lowry Point, the other just above the "bulkhead," about seven miles from the city. At present there are no guns mounted on them.

I have given those with whom I have communicated to understand that they will not be molested while pursuing their peaceful vocations. They seem to have anticipated harsh treatment, and I think that this expedition will conduce to a better feeling on their part. Those who have been prominent in rebellion are said to have left for Richmond. I enclose a list of captures made, a full list of which I have transmitted to the judge of the district in Washington. One steamer, named the Roundout, I have retained (subject to the approval of the Department) in this river. She is almost worthless, but may be made useful for getting wood, water, etc., for the flotilla.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. H. WYMAN, *Lieutenant commanding Flotilla.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

FLOTILLA, POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK, *April 20, 1862.*

SIR : The following is a list of the vessels captured by this flotilla on the Rappahannock River and its creeks :

Steam propeller Eureka, of Georgetown. Cargo, 30 pounds cotton warp ; 2 bags cotton ; 2 sides leather ; 9 ploughs ; 24 shears.

Schooner Monterey, of Tappahannock. Sails, etc., complete. No cargo.

Schooner Lookout, of Baltimore. Sails, rigging, etc., complete. Cargo, corn for Confederate government.

Schooner Sarah Ann, of Newbern. Sails, etc., complete. Cargo, corn. Abandoned.

Schooner Sydney Jones, of Baltimore. Sails, furniture, etc., complete. No cargo. Abandoned.

Sloop Reindeer, of Tappahannock. Sails, etc., complete. No cargo. Abandoned.

Schooner Falchon, of Tappahannock. Sails, etc., complete. No cargo. Abandoned.

Schooner Sea Flower. Abandoned ; secreted in a creek, and masts cut away to prevent detection. Cargo, 4 barrels bone-dust ; 5,400 pounds copperas ; 600 pounds saltpetre ; 20 pounds indigo ; 672 pounds carbonate soda ; 500 pounds alum ; 2 small compasses ; 60 pounds shoe-thread ; 40 pounds shoe-thread colored ; 176 gallons castor-oil ; 8 gross essence coffee ; 4 dozen cans solidified lye ; 2 large cases of assorted dry-goods, cloths, hosiery, and notions.

Steamer Roundout, side-wheel. No cargo.

No papers were found in any of the above-mentioned vessels.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. H. WYMAN, *Lieutenant commanding Flotilla.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

FLOTILLA, POTOMAC AND RAPPAHANNOCK, *May 8, 1862.*

SIR : I have the honor to enclose herewith the reports of Lieutenant-Commanding Badger, steamer Anacostia, and of Lieutenant-Commanding Magaw, steamer Freedom, of their examination of Mob Jack Bay and the Piankatank River. I have since learned that the light-boat taken from Windmill Point spit is anchored inside Gwinn's Island, and have some clew to where the lighting apparatus is. These I shall make every effort to obtain. I have found it necessary to take and destroy all vessels and boats of any size on the Rappahannock, as they were being used to cross men from the peninsula, and I am convinced that there is hardly a man with Union sentiments on the southern bank of the river.

It is now rumored among the negroes that the enemy intend placing batteries on the Rappahannock, and the points selected have been pointed out by them; but as yet no step has been taken toward it. Should they do so, I think it will be merely for the purpose of protecting a crossing nearly opposite the Brisco mines, from which point a field-battery could be brought to command entirely their position (selected by report). The river is so narrow above Tappahannock as to render it almost impossible for vessels to act against even a field-battery. At present there are but a few pickets on the southern bank of the river, and they generally keep well out of range.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. H. WYMAN, *Lieutenant commanding Flotilla.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*



## CHAPTER X.

### CAPTURE OF THE PRIVATEER ROYAL YACHT.—BOMBARDMENT OF THE FORTS AT PENSACOLA.

In the early part of the war the rebels made many attempts to fit out small vessels for privateers; but they inflicted very little injury upon our commerce until they were supplied with ships by their English friends.

In the autumn of 1861 a small schooner of this description was prepared in the harbor of Galveston, and in the early part of November it was evident that she was ready for sea, and was watching an opportunity to escape. Captain Henry Eagle, of the frigate *Santee*, then lying off Galveston bar, determined to make an effort to destroy this schooner, which was named the *Royal Yacht*. The expedition had also a more important purpose in view, which was not accomplished. The large man-of-war steamer *General Rusk* lay at that time in the harbor, under the guns of Pelican Island fort. The intention was to pass the schooner, and the *Bolivar* and Point forts, and then surprise and destroy the *General Rusk*. But the boats, in going in, grounded on the *Bolivar* spit, and were discovered while in that position. Not thinking it advisable, after this accident, to attack the large steamer, the boats returned, and on their way boarded the schooner, and, after a desperate fight, captured and burned her, with a loss of one man killed and eight wounded, one of whom died soon after. The following are the short official accounts of this gallant little action, by which our coast-wise commerce was saved from the depredations of a dangerous privateer:

U. S. FRIGATE *SANTER*, OFF GALVESTON BAR, TEXAS, *November 12, 1861.*

SIR: I respectfully inform you that on the night of the 7th instant an expedition left this ship, composed of the first and second launches, armed with howitzers, under command of Lieutenant James E. Jouett and John J. Mitchell, with Mr. William Carter, gunner, and Acting-Master's Mate Charles W. Adams, which I am happy to inform you resulted in the total destruction, by fire, of the schooner *Royal Yacht*, captured after a desperate encounter. She was a large schooner, with accommodations for about twenty-five persons. She carried a 32-pound gun on a circle, and was handsomely fitted up. She appeared nightly off the entrance of the harbor, and I was apprehensive that she was fitted out as a privateer, and was awaiting a favorable opportunity to escape.

Thirteen prisoners were taken, three of whom are wounded. Several of the rebels were killed. It is with deep regret that I have to add that Henry Garcia, seaman, was killed during the action, and John L. Emerson, coxswain, has since died of his wounds. Lieutenant James E. Jouett and Mr. William Carter, gunner, are wounded, but are doing well; their services we shall not have for some time. The following men are wounded: Edward Conway, gunner's mate; George Bell, coxswain; Francis Brown, seaman; Hugh McGregor, ordinary seaman; and Charles Hawkins, seaman. The surgeon reports that they are all doing well. A copy of my orders and Lieutenant Jouett's official report, with my remarks upon the gallant conduct of the officers and men engaged in the expedition, I will forward by the next steamer. Lieutenant Jouett is not yet well enough to make out his report. The prisoners will be sent to New York by the next steamer. One of them is the notorious villain Thomas Chubb; and it is my opinion that they are a desperate set of fellows. I take this opportunity to mention that we are very short of officers, on account of so many having been transferred, two being away in the prize, two being in the schooners, and the illness of Lieutenant Jouett and Mr. Carter. I respectfully request that Acting-Master Freeman, or some watch-officer, may be ordered to this ship.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY EAGLE, *Captain.*

*Flag-Officer Wm. W. McKean, command'g Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

U. S. FRIGATE *SANTER*, OFF GALVESTON BAR, TEXAS, *November 14, 1861.*

SIR: In obedience to your orders of the 7th instant, I took the first and second launches, and, at 11.40 P. M. that day, proceeded into the harbor, intending, if we could pass the armed schooner guarding the

channel, and the Bolivar and Point forts, to try to surprise and burn the man-of-war steamer General Rusk, lying under Pelican Island fort.

We succeeded in passing the schooner and two forts; but in attempting to avoid the sentinels on Pelican fort, we grounded on the Bolivar spit. At this juncture we were discovered. Deeming it imprudent, after this discovery, to encounter so large a vessel, and so heavily armed and manned, I determined to abandon that portion of the expedition.

As had been my intention, in return we boarded, and, after a sharp conflict, captured the armed schooner Royal Yacht. We took a few stands of arms, thirteen prisoners, and her colors. As our pilot had been shot down, and the schooner had received a shell between wind and water, I did not deem it advisable to attempt to bring her out; we therefore burned her, after spiking her gun, a light 32-pounder. After this we returned to the ship.

I regret to state that one man was killed, two officers and six men wounded, one mortally, who has since died.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES E. JOUETT, *Lieutenant U. S. Navy.*

*Captain HENRY EAGLE, commanding U. S. Frigate Santee.*

Soon after the capture of the forts at Hilton Head, it was determined to follow up the victories already gained, by a joint attack with Fort Pickens, on the rebel works at Pensacola. These fortifications consisted of Forts Barrancas and McRea, and several adjoining water batteries. The vessels at that station then were the Niagara, the largest ship in the Navy, and the Richmond, one of our largest sloops of the class of the Hartford. The bombardment, directed against the navy-yard, Fort McRea, and the sand batteries, was continued for two days, with very little effect so far as the ships were concerned. The shells from Fort Pickens set fire to the town of Warrington, and it, with the marine barracks, was entirely consumed.

The official reports of this action are subjoined, both because they are graphic descriptions, and because they show in the failure of the attempt the difference between attacking forts and stationary batteries at close range, as at Hatteras and Port Royal, where the men were swept from their guns by grape and shell, and a bombardment at a distance of two miles. It

shows under what circumstances a fleet may assault land batteries with success :

U. S. FLAG-SHIP NIAGARA, OFF FORT PICKENS, *November 25, 1861.*

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that, on the 22d instant, a combined attack was made upon the rebels at this place, by Colonel Brown, of Fort Pickens, and the United States ships Niagara and Richmond, under my command.

By previous arrangement, the ships were to attack Fort McRea and the adjoining water batteries; I had, therefore, lightened this ship as much as possible, by sending down and landing the top-gallant masts, together with all the spare spars, hoisting out all the boats, and placing the howitzers in them in readiness for service, and, as she had but little coal or provision on board, succeeded in reducing her draught to twenty-one feet ten inches.

During the night of the 21st instant a position had been selected, and a buoy placed in four fathoms water; and on the following morning at 10 o'clock, at the firing of the first gun from the fort (the signal agreed upon), the Niagara stood in, followed by the Richmond, and both ships came to anchor with springs on their cables, the Niagara in four fathoms and the Richmond in twenty feet water, Fort McRea bearing from the Niagara about north, distance two miles. We immediately opened fire, but finding the shells from the Niagara fell short, boats were sent out to sound, and a buoy placed in twenty-three feet water, near to the edge of the shoal, distant from Fort McRea about one mile and three-quarters.

At ten minutes after 12 o'clock we weighed, stood in to the buoy, anchored, and sprung the starboard broadside to bear. Our fire was then resumed with marked effect; many of our shells falling directly into the sand-battery and fort, and several apparently passing *through* the wall. At 3.15 p. m. the sand-battery was silenced for the day by the *cross-fire* from the ships and fort. The barbette guns of McRea were silenced almost immediately after opening fire, and the fire from the casemate guns was gradually slackened, till at 5 p. m. it was silenced *entirely*. That the injury to McRea must be very considerable is proved by the fact that not a gun was fired from that fort during the second day's bombardment.

The Richmond, owing to her light draught of water, was able to take a position closer to the northern shore than the Niagara, and so far in the rear of both fort and battery that their guns could not be brought to bear upon her. For several hours she escaped without a shot, but in

the afternoon a *masked battery* among the sand-hills, on the *main land* back of the lagoon, opened upon her. Finding that the rebels were getting her range, she changed her position, and shortly after, fearing that she had been struck, and perceiving that *her shells* fell considerably short of the enemy, I signalled her to drop out of the line of fire. The guns in this masked battery were, I think, rifled, and of very heavy calibre; throwing shells over and considerably beyond her.

About 6 P. M. a sudden squall came up from the northward and westward, the wind blowing very fresh, with heavy rain. This caused a fall in the tide, and the ship touching the bottom we were obliged to weigh as quickly as possible, and stand out into deeper water for the night. The enemy availed themselves of this opportunity to repair the sand-battery, and mount in it several guns of heavy calibre.

At 9 A. M. on the following morning, the wind still fresh from the northward and westward, we again got under way, stood in, anchored in four fathoms water (there being some swell), and opened fire. This was returned briskly from the sand-battery. Finding that our shells fell short, ceased firing, and (as the buoy which we had placed on the previous evening to mark our position had been blown adrift during the night) sent boats to sound; weighed and stood closer in, anchoring in twenty-three feet water, again opening our fire. Our shells, however, still fell short. As it was impossible to get any closer (the ship touching the bottom occasionally), I carcened her as much as possible to obtain more elevation, increased the charges, and spent more than an hour in trying every *possible expedient* to make our shot reach, but without success.

During this time the shells of the enemy were falling thick about and passing over us, some going far beyond. I therefore deemed it my duty to withdraw the ship, and to have retained our position would have been to expose both her and the crew to serious injury with no possible advantage. Our not being able to get within range was owing to the fact that the northerly wind had lowered the water, and was directly *in face* of our fire.

The Richmond having expended her twenty fuses on the previous day, and being satisfied that her guns were outranged by those of the enemy, I deemed it best that she should not join in the attack. Two shots struck this ship, one abaft the fore-chains, lodging between the outer and inner planking; the other a little forward of the mizzen chains, passing through the planking, and lodging in one of the knees, starting both the knee and the inner planking; the injury, however, is trifling.

The Richmond also received two shots—one struck forward, shattering the rail and hammock nettings, the other was a shell, which glanced under her counter and exploded in the water, some four feet below the surface, breaking and pressing inboard several of her planks, and causing a serious leak.

The loss in the engagement was one man killed on board the Richmond by a shot, and seven slightly wounded by the splinters. The Niagara, though so much exposed, especially on the second day, escaped entirely.

I would here remark that the experience gained in this affair has convinced me that ships cannot *operate effectively* against forts and earth-works, unless they can approach within a few hundred yards. Had the ships been able to run *close in* to McRea, our batteries, in my opinion, could have demolished both it and the sand-battery in a very short time.

The principal object of the bombardment, the destruction of the navy-yard, I am sorry to say, was not accomplished; but the shells from Fort Pickens set fire to the town of Warrington, which is completely destroyed, also the marine barracks, thereby depriving the enemy of comfortable quarters.

I desire to bring to your notice the fact that neither this ship nor the Richmond was furnished by the ordnance department with any fuses longer than 15", nor am I aware of there being any in the squadron. Had it not been for a supply of 20" fuses, furnished by Colonel Brown, the ships could not have aided in the bombardment. It is useless to furnish shell-guns of long range, unless fuses to correspond are provided.

I am greatly disappointed in the range of the 11-inch guns, for with an elevation of 16° (the most we could get after careening the ship) we could not obtain a range of two miles.

I ordered a survey upon the Richmond (a copy of which I herewith transmit), and shall send her to Key West to repair the injury from the shot, and also that received while in the Mississippi, as the anchorage here is too much exposed, and it may be necessary to land her guns.

I herewith transmit a copy of notes furnished by Captain Ellison. He reports to me favorably of the conduct of all on board his ship. On board this ship all did their duty; both officers and crew were in high spirits.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM W. MCKEAN,

*Flag-Officer, commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, OFF PENSACOLA BAR, *November 22, 1861.*

SIR: I have the honor to present to you the following rough notes on the action of to-day. At 9.55 A. M. Fort Pickens and batteries opened fire upon the navy-yard, etc.; at 10 we got under way; at 10.10 beat to quarters; at 10.20 Fort McRea opened fire on the fleet, shot falling short; at 10.35 spoke the flag-officer; at 10.45 let go the stream anchor with a spring, and brought the starboard broadside to bear upon the enemy; at 11 A. M. fired fore-castle gun and the starboard battery, our shot falling short; at 10.30 our shot began to take effect on the fort, the enemy's shell falling short; at 12.5 firing fore-castle gun only, with 20" shell and hollow shot; at 12.25 P. M. a masked battery opened fire on us from the woods to the westward of Fort McRea; at 12.50 eased our spring cable; at 12.55 piped one watch to dinner; at 2.40 still firing deliberately at both the battery and the fort, shot doing some execution; at 2.45 the buildings outside of the fort discovered to be on fire; at 3 P. M. a shot from the masked battery struck this ship between wind and water, between the main and mizzen chains, the leak discovered in the starboard spirit-room; at 3.20 the fire from the masked battery quite rapid—Fort McRea silent; at 4.20 P. M. a shot from the battery struck this ship by number two gun, killing the captain of the gun and wounding seven men, breaking the swinging boom and shattering the rail and hammock nettings, etc.; at 4.30 the fire from the battery very accurate, the shells bursting near and around us; at 4.50 P. M. the flag-officer made signal 12, 18; at 5 P. M. hove up anchor, gave the battery our full starboard battery, and stood for the flag-ship; at 5.05 the flag-officer made signal 222; at 5.10 beat retreat; at 5.15 spoke the flag-officer; at 6 P. M. anchored in six and a half ( $6\frac{1}{2}$ ) fathoms water.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

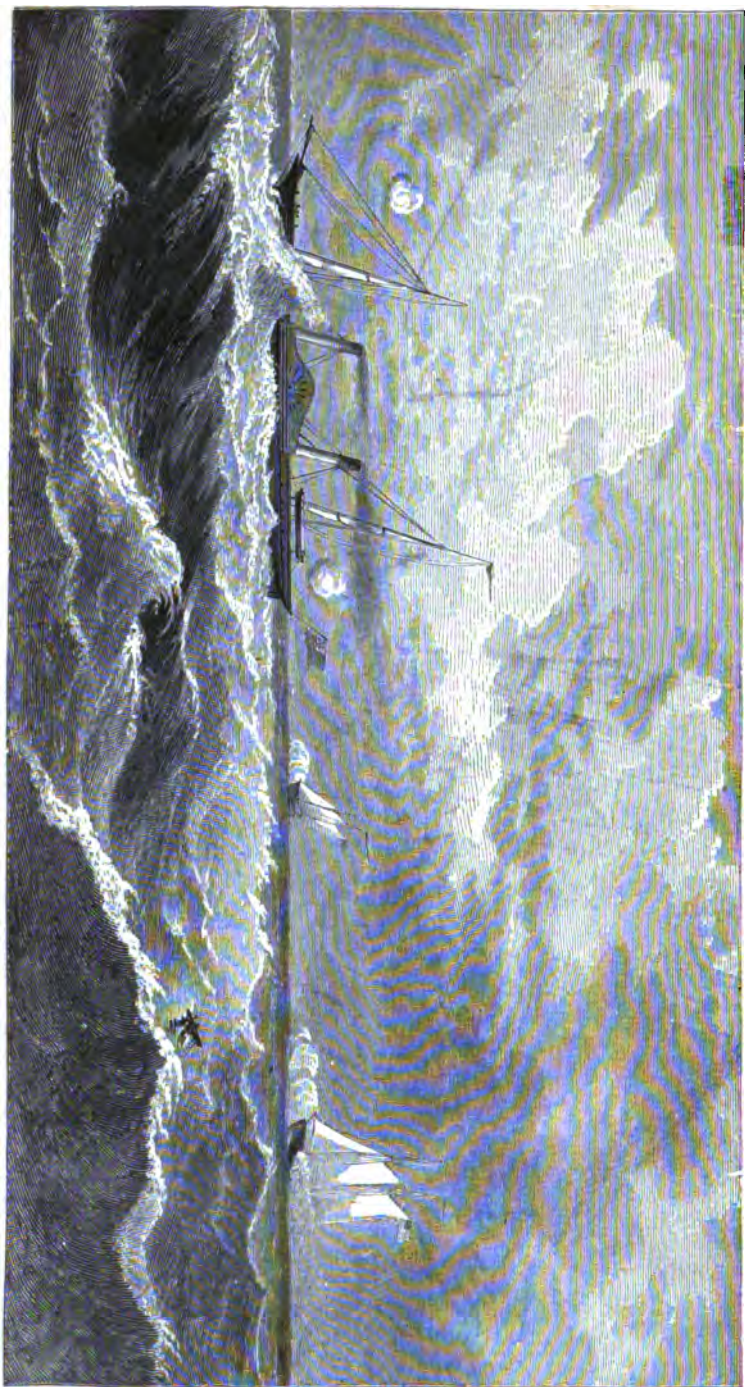
H. WALTON GRINNELL,

*Acting-Master's Mate and Aide to Captain.*

*Captain F. B. ELLISON, U. S. Steamer Richmond.*







GUNBOATS CHASING A BLOCKADE-RUNNER.

[illegible]



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MAILS OF THE PETERHOFF.

IN their attempts to aid the rebels, weaken the Union cause, and enrich themselves, the British merchants and capitalists left nothing untried which the conspirators could suggest or their own wisdom devise. The topography and hydrography of our whole coast were studied with the utmost care, and every spot was noted which offered an opportunity of violating our blockade. To these watchful eyes, made keen-sighted both by self-interest and hostility to the North, the Mexican city of Matamoras seemed to present an excellent base for their operations. This town is on the right bank of the Rio Grande, and very nearly opposite the town of Brownsville in Texas, so that any goods landed at Matamoras, intended for the rebels, might be considered as virtually at Brownsville, for there was not the slightest obstacle to their being sent directly across. In such cases of proximity of a neutral port to that of an enemy, it has been held by both French and English authorities that such neutral port should be considered as affected by the blockade, and that contraband articles destined to a neutral port thus situated may be lawfully seized.

Overlooking, perhaps, these principles, the Treasury Department adopted the practice of granting clearances for American vessels to Matamoras; and thus, for any whose principles did not prevent them, an unobstructed channel was opened for an almost direct trade with the rebels. The English merchants were quick to take advantage of this state of things, and a line of four steamers was started for Matamoras, of which line the Peterhoff was one.

On the 25th of February, 1863, the *Peterhoff* was boarded, under the belligerent right of search, off the harbor of the Island of St. Thomas by the American war-steamer *Vanderbilt*. The refusal of the captain of the *Peterhoff* to permit his papers to go on board the *Vanderbilt* for examination, and some other suspicious circumstances, caused the steamer to be captured, and she was sent into New York that her case might be adjudicated in the prize court. Previous to this, Lord Lyons, then British minister, had succeeded in drawing from our Secretary of State the admission that the mail-bags of any captured vessel should be forwarded unopened to the governments to which they belonged, or whose seal they bore. No time was lost in having this fact proclaimed in the English Parliament, and thus all who desired to violate our blockade were informed "by authority" that the government mail-bags would be thenceforth inviolate, and, of course, a safe depository for all papers which might be used as evidence against a vessel in case of her capture.

The Secretary of State, having made this admission to Lord Lyons, was, of course, very anxious that the Government should adopt the policy which he had suggested. He proposed to the Secretary of the Navy that an order should be issued from his Department directing that in all cases the captured mails should be given up unopened, and then proceeded, apparently, upon the assumption that such an order had been actually given, and that the policy of the Government was settled as he desired. The Secretary of the Navy issued no such direction, because he believed that it would be contrary both to universal practice and every principle of international law.

When the *Peterhoff* was captured, her mails were sent forward as usual with the ship, and given into the custody of the prize commissioners. As soon as this was known, Lord Lyons complained to the Secretary of State that the arrangement they had made had not been carried out. The Secretary visited Mr. Welles, and showed much surprise that his suggestions had not been acted upon, and urged that the mails of the *Peterhoff* should be surrendered. The Secretary of the Navy informed him that he could not consent to such an innovation in national practice, or such a surrender of our own belligerent rights; that in his opinion, to give up the mails of captured vessels

without examination, would secure the escape of every vessel, after the practice should be established and known, and would make of the blockade a ridiculous farce. Mr. Seward appealed to the President, and the question occasioned Mr. Lincoln no little perplexity. On the 21st of April, 1863, he addressed the following letter to the two Secretaries :

EXECUTIVE MANSION, *April 21, 1863.*

*Hon. Secretaries of State and Navy :*

GENTLEMEN : It is now a practical question for this Government, whether a government mail of a neutral power, found on board a vessel captured by a belligerent power, on charge of breach of blockade, shall be forwarded to its designated destination, without opening, or shall be placed in custody of the prize court, to be, in the discretion of the court, opened and searched for evidence to be used on the trial of the prize case. I will thank each of you to furnish me—

*First*, a list of all cases wherein such question has been passed upon, either by a diplomatic or a judicial decision.

*Secondly*, all cases wherein mails under such circumstances have been without special discussion either forwarded unopened, or detained and opened in search of evidence. I wish these lists to embrace as well the reported cases in the books generally, as the cases pertaining to the present war in the United States.

*Thirdly*, a statement and brief argument of what would be the dangers and evils of forwarding such mails unopened.

*Fourthly*, a statement and brief argument of what would be the dangers and evils of detaining and opening such mails, and using the contents, if pertinent, as evidence.

And lastly, any general remarks that may occur to you or either of you.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

To this the Secretary of the Navy made the following reply :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 25, 1863.*

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 21st inst., in which you direct me to furnish certain information, which is called for by you in consequence of the application made by the British minister, Lord Lyons, for the delivery, without examination by the prize court, of the government mail found on board the Peterhoff, a British vessel recently captured and brought into the port of New York.

This application had previously been made known to this Department, and was urged upon it, not as a request, but, as I understood, a demand founded on a communication by which a right is assumed to have been yielded by this Government.

It is, I believe, nowhere claimed by Lord Lyons or the parties in interest, that by any law or usage of this or any other country, or by any principle or practice among nations, that this examination should not be made, but it is urged or demanded that the mail shall be given up and the evidence essential to condemnation surrendered, by reason of a letter from the Secretary of State, under date of October 31, 1862, addressed to the Secretary of the Navy, suggesting instructions to our naval officers. The proposed instructions would in my judgment have been such a renunciation of the rights of the nation and of the captors that the suggestions were never carried into effect.

The pretension that mail-bags found on board vessels captured at sea should be exempt from examination by a prize court, appears to the Department not only novel and startling, but, if admitted, pregnant with the most serious consequences. A recognition of it would seem to be nothing less than a surrender of all the rights of the captor government in such courts.

The Department, after inquiry, can find no precedent for such a pretension—no case in which it has been either asserted diplomatically or affirmed judicially. The right of examining all papers, of whatsoever nature, found on board a captured vessel, appears to have been always exercised.

Our own earliest statute on the subject, the Act of March 2, 1799, for the government of the Navy, directs that

*"All papers, charter parties, bills of lading, passports, and other writings whatsoever, found on board any ship or ships which shall be taken, shall be carefully preserved, and the originals sent to the courts of justice for maritime affairs."*

So too the Act of April 23, 1800: "The commanding officer of every ship or vessel in the Navy, who shall capture, or seize upon, any vessel as a prize, shall carefully preserve all the papers and writings found on board, and transmit the whole of the originals un mutilated to the judge of the district to which such prize is ordered to proceed."

Our law on this subject is borrowed from the British law and practice. The instructions of the king to commanders of letters of marque, issued September 29, 1798, direct them to bring and deliver to the admiralty judge—"all such papers, passes, sea-briefs, charter-parties, bills of lading, cockets, *letters and other documents and writings* as shall

be delivered up or *found on board* any ship.”—(2 Rob., Appendix No. VIII.)

It has never been pretended that these instructions, which except no letters or papers whatsoever, whether contained in mail-bags or not, are in violation of international law. And yet for what purpose are all the letters and writings found on board, without exception, to be delivered to the admiralty judge if not to be used as evidence in the case?

The “standing interrogatories” administered to all the witnesses in every prize, British or American, direct them to state under oath:

“16th Interrogate: What papers, bills of lading, *letters, or other writings* were on board the ship at the time she took her departure from the last clearing port, before her being taken as a prize? Were any of them burnt, torn, thrown overboard, destroyed or cancelled, or attempted to be concealed, and when, and by whom, and who was then present?”

What necessity could exist for destroying or attempting to conceal “letters or other writings,” if, by simply enclosing them in a mail-bag, they were exempted from examination? The very reason for destroying or attempting to conceal them is, that the mail-bag is *not* exempt from examination by the court. And the very reason for making it all-important to seek and find the information concealed in letters is, that, without such information, there would hardly in any case be sufficient proof to condemn a vessel. So far as it respects the ordinary ship’s papers—clearance, manifests, etc.—every vessel would appear innocent.

“No rule can be better known,” says Sir William Scott, “than that neutral masters are not at liberty to destroy papers; or if they do, that they will not be permitted to explain away such a suppression by saying ‘they were only private letters.’”—(The Two Brothers, 1 Rob. 134.)

This rule, so well known, must have originated from the practice of destroying papers, and such practice necessarily implies the practice of searching for, seizing, and sending in for judicial examination all papers, including “private letters.”

The British practice of seizing such private letters and using them in evidence in the prize court will appear from the case of the *Romeo*. (6 Rob.) The report of the case shows that the commander of a British gun-brig, in the exercise of the right of search, had stopped an American vessel, “had examined her papers, and finding a letter which purported to disclose the real state of a transaction which had been fraudulently concealed, had sent the paper in question to the king’s proctor, officially, but without detaining the ship in which it was found.” The letter was a private letter, having no relation to the vessel in which it was found or the cargo of that vessel, but relating to another vessel.



In the case of the *Atlanta* (6 Rob.), Sir William Scott refers to the case of the *Lisette* "which had carried a Dutch packet in the Danish *mail-bag*." How could this have been known, but by examining the Danish *mail-bag*?

In the case of the *Caroline* (6 Rob.), dispatches from the minister and consul of France, in the United States, to the Government of France, were found on board an American vessel. As it had never been decided and was not in this case decided, that carrying such dispatches was ground for condemnation, it is presumed that these dispatches were not concealed on board the *Caroline*, but found in the ship's letter-bag.

The practice of our courts, so far as is known, has been in conformity with that of the British. Our statute peremptorily directs that all "papers and writings found on board" a captured vessel shall be sent to the district judge. The Department is not aware of any exception taken to this law until very recently; though in the numerous captures which have been made during the present war, *mail-bags* containing important correspondence must have been frequently transmitted to the prize court. If there had been any violation of international law or usage in this course, it is not to be doubted that we should have been very promptly reminded of it, and in earnest terms. Yet it is not until near the close of the second year of the war, that any thing in the nature of a remonstrance appears, and then the remonstrance is not against a departure from international law or usage, but against the tenure of a surrender of an independent and established right made and communicated to the British minister without alleged authority from the President, and, as is believed by this Department, in direct contravention of the ancient policy of this and other governments, and of the rights and duties of captors as defined by statute.

That there may be in the discretion of the prize courts some exception to an indiscriminate examination of all letters and writings found on board of a captured ship, may be admitted in cases where such exception does not interfere with the proper evidence; and, no doubt, such exceptions have been made in practice in favor of official dispatches. They have been regulated, however, not by strict international law, but rather as a matter of comity between nations.

If a *mail-bag* on board a captured vessel is to be held sacred and free from judicial examination, what security will there be that it does not conceal and protect the proof which the captor requires to condemn his prize, and which would be sufficient to condemn it? No government could give such assurance without a previous examination of all the private letters admitted into the bag. Few private individuals would

be content to have their letters examined by government officials, before being admitted into the mail, although they might be willing to run the risk of their being examined by belligerents during war.

And if individuals are willing to run this risk, why should their government insist on protecting them against it? Why, indeed, should the most exacting government insist that any thing more than its own dispatches, certified as such, or claimed as such by responsible officers, should, when known to be such, be free from scrutiny? There would be little difficulty in framing an arrangement to this effect.

No such arrangement is now in existence, except, as before stated, informally, perhaps by custom, and in conformity with the comity due to friendly or neutral governments in reference to their admitted official dispatches.

The instructions which were issued by this Department on the 18th August last to commanders of vessels of the Navy, authorizing them to use their discretion in delivering up government mails or dispatches found on board captured vessels, to be opened and examined in their presence, merely empowered them to exercise a comity toward neutral or friendly governments, the exercise of which might be safely intrusted to those who were on the spot, had the means of judging, and, being interested in the capture, were not likely to show undue indulgence. The only doubt entertained by me as to these instructions was, whether they were in strict conformity with our statute and with the rights of the captors. But in deference to the State Department, communicating with foreign powers, it seemed possible to presume that the Executive Government might have so much discretionary power in such cases.

These instructions, however, I considered a stretch of power on the part of this Department, and even of the Executive, and when it was proposed shortly afterward that they should be put in the form of a positive injunction to forward immediately to their destination all government mails found on captured vessels, a very little reflection sufficed to convince me that no such order ought to be issued.

But, unfortunately, it has been taken for granted that a mere suggestion made without alleged authority by the President, and by this Department at once objected to, was carried into immediate execution; and what is more unfortunate, at least one foreign government has been led apparently to adopt the very same erroneous conclusion.

Such presumption is wholly unauthorized and is incompatible with the nature and organization of our Government. Under our Constitution and laws the Chief Magistrate gives, or is supposed to give, directly

to the head of each of the principal Departments his orders in relation to the business of the Departments respectively, and this most especially in all matters of *national* importance.

And in matters, especially important matters, affecting the *international* relations of the Government, or its rights as a belligerent, even the Chief Magistrate might hesitate to adjust questions by an executive order, but would prefer to make them the subject of reciprocal treaty stipulations duly considered and clearly expressed, to be submitted to the scrutiny of the body whose concurrence is necessary.

There is nothing to justify the presumption that this Government would, at a time like the present, surrender any of its belligerent rights by an executive order, in pursuance of a mere suggestion, not even reciprocal in its nature, and especially when such concession would effectually deprive it of all the advantages of the right of search.

It is remarkable that, in our traditional anxiety to protect in treaty stipulations at every point all the rights of neutrals, we have never attempted to reserve mails, or mail-bags, or mail-matter from the scrutiny of a prize court. On the contrary, we have always recognized that, by the law of prize, mail-matter may be contraband—for enemy dispatches are mail-matter, and no prize court in the United States, or in any other country, has ever doubted that they were contraband. In our treaty with New Granada we stipulate for the inviolability of correspondence on its land transit across the isthmus from ocean to ocean, but we abstain from attempting to make it inviolable on the sea. In our treaty with the Argentine Republic we stipulate, reciprocally, the free access of mail-packets to the ports of the contracting parties, but there is no record in the treaty excepting them or their mail-bags out of the belligerent right and law of search and judicial examination. On the contrary, Hautefeuille—perhaps the most eminent living publicist of France, and known as preëminently the champion of the rights of neutrals—in his very last publication, elicited by the affair of the Trent, does not hesitate expressly to affirm that no mail steam-packet can, in its quality of a regular and recognized government mail-carrier, claim immunity from search, and much less, of course, from judicial examination. In the war with Mexico we, as a mere favor, permitted the ingress of British mail-steamers into Mexican blockaded ports. The mail-steamer Teviot abused the indulgence by carrying in the Mexican General Paredes. We thereupon asserted, diplomatically, our right both to condemn the Teviot and to withdraw the privilege from all the mail-packets. The British Government made no denial of our position, and settled the matter satisfactorily.—(Mr. Bancroft to Lord Palmerston, October 8, 1847.)

On these grounds of judicial authority, of ancient practice, of statute law, and of public policy embodied in treaty stipulations, it is considered to be clear and unquestionable that, in every case of capture of a ship upon probable cause, every manuscript, or printed paper, found on board of her is liable in law to the inspection of a prize court. Indeed, a part of the complaint of the British Government in the case of the Trent was that the vessel was not brought in for adjudication in order to enable the court to determine whether or not she be good prize. It cannot be otherwise—for being so captured the ship is presumed to be in *delicto*—to be *pro hac vice* adhering to the enemy—by some form of violation of the belligerent right of the captor government; and this predicament of the ship necessarily opens to the tribunal all the proofs of guilt which the ship contains.

But all this, though conclusive, is not the most important point involved in this inquiry. That point is *not* the immunity of a government mail-bag from inspection by a prize court, but it *is* the far higher and graver point of the immunity of the jurisdiction of the prize court itself from Executive interference. This transcendent question has been fully settled by the unanimous and unquestioned assent of all the Departments of this Government. By the Constitution and by the law, our prize courts, unlike those of England and other European powers, are not a portion, or an appendage, or a dependant of the political administration, but are a part of the permanent organization of the judicial power, and invested with its independence in the determination and application of the law to all the cases of which they take cognizance. In a whole series of treaties, beginning with the convention with France in 1800 and continuing down to our latest treaties with Spanish America, we solemnly stipulate that the prize courts of the contracting parties shall have exclusive cognizance and adjudication of all questions of prize, and in case of condemnation shall render, and on demand certify, to claimants the grounds of such condemnation.

In our proclamation opening New Orleans and other ports to vessels from foreign ports, licensed by our consuls under authority of the President, we insert as a condition of the license that the vessels shall carry *no information* useful to the enemy, and the condition of her clearance by our own collector for her return voyage is, that he shall be satisfied and certify that in entering the port she has complied with the requirements of her license. Must not the collector, then, have authority to inspect the mail she brings? And if our collector in execution of our municipal law has such authority, can we doubt that the prize court has it under the broader belligerent right of search and the law of war? In

our recent treaty with Great Britain respecting the slave-trade, negotiated by the present Secretary of State, the reciprocal right of search established by that treaty contains no exemption of mails or mail-matter from such search. Suppose the *Peterhoff* had been brought in on suspicion under that treaty, is there a doubt that every paper on board of her could, in the discretion of the court, be looked into in order to settle the question of her guilt? We must remember that this question of the mail on board of a captured ship is a question of evidence against her. If the District Attorney may lawfully threaten the court that he will abandon the case if the court looks into such evidence, by reason of its being under an official seal, or lock, why may he not also in his discretion make the same threat to the court on the question of its inspecting any other official paper—the register, or clearance, for example—which the ship contains? But by the whole law all this is settled otherwise. It is for the court under the law, and not for the Executive, to determine what papers found on board the prize-ship shall be inspected as evidence.

No muniment by a foreign government can shield any writing whatever found on board a captured ship from such inspection, when deemed necessary by the court in the due administration of justice.

In repeated cases, and without doubt or denial, the Supreme Court of the United States, with the full sanction of the Executive, has sat in judgment on the question, not of inspecting for evidence the government mail-bag, but as condemning as good prize a regularly documented vessel, or commissioned armed vessel, composing part of the navy of a foreign friendly power. Three of these cases—that of the *Cassius* in the 2d of Dallas, and that of the *Exchange* in the 7th of Cranch, and that of *La Jeune Eugenie*—are reviewed by Mr. Attorney-General Wirt in an official opinion given by him in the year 1821. In these cases not only the foreign minister claimed, *but the President was fully satisfied*, that the court could not condemn without infraction of the sovereign right of a friendly power by reason of the public character and commission of the ship. What happened? Did the President direct the court to release the ship, or not proceed to adjudication? Did the District Attorney threaten to abandon the case if the court should proceed? Quite the contrary. The President, *through the Attorney-General*, came into court, and made suggestion for the consideration of the court, as a part of the fact in the case, that the Executive was satisfied the ship was a public ship—such suggestion—no way mandatory in its character, but leaving open to the unswayed determination of the court all the evidence and the whole question of prize or no prize—was the uttermost limit to

which the Executive deemed it right to proceed. The very careful language of Attorney-General Wirt on this point merits your special attention. It may be found in vol. i. of "Opinions of Attorneys-General," page 505.

In the late case of the *Amistad* (15 Pet. Rep., page 587), the claim of Spain, made in virtue of its sovereign right, even when supported by the admission of our Executive, was, to the great satisfaction of the country, overruled by the prize court, and the Executive did not contest the validity of its decree.—(See, for citation, with approval of these cases, "Wheaton's Elements," second edition by Laurence, page 969 *et seq.*)

These cases are as strong as any which can possibly be imagined, to show the absolute independence of our prize courts in the adjudication of the most transcendent claims of foreign sovereignties, when presented in cases of prize; and the acknowledged immunity of these tribunals from any species of dictation or interference by the Executive Government.

In the presence of such precedents, is it not clear that the prize court has full right to examine the mail-bag found on board of a captured vessel, which doubtless contains conclusive evidence of her liability to condemnation?

I observe that the terms of your letter refer only to vessels captured for alleged violation of the blockade. I suppose this restriction to be accidental, and that you intend the inquiry to extend to mails found on board of vessels captured for any cause as prize of war. The case of the *Peterhoff*, as I understand it, is not one of violated blockade, but a case of contraband.

I observe also that your letter makes no reference to the question as to which Department of the Government is the proper organ to convey any suggestion from the President to the prize court; nor does it refer to the question which of the heads of Department is the statutory organ of the President to convey instructions to the District Attorneys of the United States. It is in my opinion important to the good order of executive business, that there should be no conflict or misapprehension as to the character of the instructions to such officers; and I therefore beg leave to refer you to the recent act of Congress of August 2, 1861, which, in the pressure of your cares, may have escaped your attention. It places the District Attorneys, in the conduct of all their official business, under the exclusive superintendence and direction of the Attorney-General, as the organ of the President.

The court had, it appears, no hesitation as to its rights and duty to examine the mails of the *Peterhoff*, nor had the District Attorney. The court was proceeding to exercise its duty in conformity to law and usage

when it was estopped by an order to the District Attorney, not emanating from or conveyed through that Department of the Government to which he is by law attached, directing him to demand the surrender of the mail and with it, of course, the evidence therein contained.

Now, if the mails on captured vessels are to be forwarded to their designated destination, without inspection, and the evidence which they contain thereby denied to the captors, should not the chief law officer of the Government be aware of the authority for so extraordinary a proceeding, whereby important national rights have been renounced and the rights of captors surrendered? It appears to me that, if the suggestions of the 31st of October, which effect so great and, in my judgment, so calamitous a revolution in the law of search, capture, and adjudication, are to govern our naval forces, not only the officers of the Navy, but the District Attorneys, the Judges, and all authorities of our own and other countries should be promptly informed of this great change of policy by an immediate and formal publication to that effect.

In conclusion, I have no doubt that, even under the British rule, as laid down in Earl Russell's recent communication to Mr. Spence, the *Peterhoff* was rightfully captured and is liable to condemnation for carrying contraband, ostensibly to Matamoras, but with contingent destination to Brownsville. I still hope that sufficient evidence yet remains in the reach of the court to condemn this vessel and cargo, but I greatly fear that such evidence, even in this case, may have been irreparably lost by the unfortunate surrender of the mail. However this may be in the present instance, I cannot doubt that, if this case becomes a precedent, in future all documentary evidence to condemn any such ship will be concealed in her mail-bag, and no papers but innocent ones will be found outside of it. If so, condemnation of the guiltiest ship will become almost an impossibility, while her capture may saddle her captors—who will only have done their duty—with heavy costs and damages, and probably the Government with heavy claims for indemnification to the guilty party, whom its ill-ordered surrender of a clear right shall have enabled to conceal his guilt from the judicial eye.

I most respectfully and earnestly invoke your serious and careful consideration of the evil consequences that must follow from this calamitous state of things. Already Mr. Spence, the Confederate agent, has announced that the *Peterhoff*, which had previously once run the blockade, is but one of a line of four steamers, owned by him and destined to carry goods unquestionably contraband to Matamoras. The *Peterhoff* precedent, as it now stands, arms him with power to set at defiance all our efforts to stop such trade, though its ultimate destination be un-

doubtedly to Brownsville; for, under this precedent, he will assuredly hereafter put the proof of the guilt of his vessels into the mail-bag, and so beyond our reach. Thus, by our own act, done as I think in derogation of the unquestionable right of our prize courts, we shall furnish to our enemies an abundant supply of the munitions of war through the port of Matamoras. In this view I perceive with satisfaction that the prize court has placed its surrender of the mail-bag exclusively and only upon the request of the Government, made known through the District Attorney. After careful consideration, I think that the court erred in yielding to this request, so expressed. I trust, however, that it is not yet too late for the Government to retrieve its mistake, at least in part, by taking such action and making such declaration as will prevent the case of the Peterhoff from becoming a precedent for the future surrender by the court of lawful and necessary evidence.

If we go on as we have begun in the Peterhoff case, we shall find ourselves inconsiderately relinquishing an undoubted national right, not by consent of the people or with the approval of the Government—not by treaty with reciprocal advantages, but by voluntary renunciation of an indispensable right in all naval captures in cases of contraband or breach of blockade.

Besides national abnegation, a cruel wrong is done the gallant men of our Navy, who will be liable to censure if they do not capture, and who are to be deprived by their own Government of the evidence that would sustain them.

I am, sir, with great respect, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*The President.*

The Secretary of State, apparently feeling himself fully committed to the English Government, persisted in his efforts to obtain the release of the captured steamer's mails. Mr. Welles refused to interfere, for two reasons: first, because to give up the mails would be to surrender our undoubted rights, and establish a fatal precedent in favor of our enemies; and second, because the mails were properly in the custody of the judiciary, and not even the Executive could lawfully withdraw them from that custody. At length the President was induced to approve an order directing that the mails of the captured steamer should not be used in the case, but should be given up. The Government attorney who had charge of the case was not unwilling to gratify Mr. Seward; and Judge Betts, though not actually



bound by the order, did not think it prudent, in the state of public affairs, to make any objection. He, however, condemned the *Peterhoff* as a lawful prize. An appeal was taken, and some four years after, his decision was reversed in the full court, and perhaps for the want of the very evidence which the mails contained. In every such question, as the official records fully show, the Navy Department yielded nothing to foreign persuasion or threats, but firmly defended both our rights and our honor.

It is equally due to the truth of history and to the Secretary himself that a few documents should be added here, which present some of the many perplexing questions that during the war were constantly pressed upon the attention of the Government, and these official records show the tone and policy of the Department. The insolence of the subordinate British officials was sometimes very sharply rebuked, as in the following transaction :

The steamer *Bermuda* had been captured by the blockading squadron, and sent in for trial as usual. It is common for the Government to take possession of a captured vessel after it has been appraised, becoming, of course, responsible for the amount of the appraisal, to be repaid to the owners if the vessel is not upon trial condemned. The Navy Department, finding that the blockade-runner could be made useful in the Navy, took her at the appraisal, and was proceeding to fit her out, when her majesty's chargé d'affaires thought proper to make a formal remonstrance. This was forwarded to the Secretary of the Navy from the State Department, with a note from Mr. Seward, to which the following reply was made :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 15, 1862.*

SIR: I had the honor on the evening of Saturday, the 11th instant, to receive your communication of the 10th instant, enclosing the copy of an unofficial note from Mr. Stuart, her Britannic majesty's chargé d'affaires, expressing an apprehension that it is the intention of the naval authorities to appropriate the steamer *Bermuda*, although no judgment has as yet been pronounced upon her by the court.

This is certainly a very extraordinary communication from her majesty's chargé d'affaires. The custody of captured property, or the disposition to be made of it before adjudication, is not regulated by in-

ternational law; but that law requires that an adjudication should be had as speedily as possible. In some cases the captors themselves have a right to dispose of captured property before adjudication.—(2 Rob. 31.)

The court, after the captured property comes into its possession, may deliver it on bond to the captors or claimants, or if ship or other cargo is in a perishing condition, or liable to deterioration pending the process, may order a sale of it by interlocutory decree. This is the English law, and the practice followed by our courts. There is no doubt as to this discretionary power of a prize court or as to the practice. The property is always supposed to be in the custody of the court, but the practice has been from time immemorial to consider the proceeds as representing the thing itself. Certainly the safest custodian of the property is the Government itself, which is ultimately responsible. The marshal, who ordinarily has the custody, is but an officer of the Government. In the event of a decree of restitution, if the custodian has been found to be unfaithful and the captors unable to indemnify the foreign claimants, the Government must make the restitution and indemnify the claimants. There could be no additional risk to the claimants, but rather the contrary, if the Government should take immediate possession of the captured property without waiting an order of the prize court. All that international law requires is that the evidence and all the necessary witnesses be placed in the presence of the court.

International law is rigid against individual captors; they shall not pillage in the slightest degree, upon pain of forfeiting their rights; but it does not pretend to lay down rules for the custody of captured property. It is enough that the Government of the captors is ultimately responsible for any injury done by the captors.

The Bermuda was captured on the 27th of April, 1862, about fifteen miles northeast by east from Hole in the Wall, and brought into Philadelphia. She has been appraised by order of the court, on application of the prize commissioners, and the Navy Department proposes to purchase her under the decree of the court. If so, the amount of valuation will be deposited, in conformity with law and the order of the court, with the registrar. The whole proceeding is strictly legal and strictly regular, and for the benefit of all having a legal interest in the captured steamer.

There is no novelty in these proceedings. Other captured vessels have in like manner been disposed of, and not unfrequently purchased by the Navy Department on appraisement, not only in Philadelphia,

under the order of Judge Cadwalader, but in New York, under Judge Betts, and in Key West, under Judge Marvin.

But these are matters in which I recognize no authority for foreign interference. The capture was lawful, and *prima facie* correct. It was made under the authority of the United States in the exercise of an undoubted belligerent right. But the capture is subject to adjudication, and if the court shall fail to condemn, the United States must and will respond in damages; but, until the final judgment of the court, I know of no right for foreign interference.

I cannot forbear the expression of my surprise at the interposition of her majesty's representative in the behalf of a vessel captured with such an amount of contraband of war on board intended to afford assistance to rebels who are waging war upon this Government. Her cargo of guns, shot, shell, powder, etc., is a perfect magazine of munitions, designed, as you and I well knew before she left the shores of England, for those of our countrymen who are in insurrection. Taken as she was, on the high seas, with contraband of war on board in large quantities, does her majesty's representative appear, even unofficially, in behalf of this vessel, whose mission was to do wrong, to violate our laws, injure our country, and furnish insurgent rebels with the means to destroy our countrymen, with whom he and his Government are professedly on terms of amity and friendship?

Assuredly, her majesty's chargé d'affaires could not have been aware of the character of the steamer Bermuda and her cargo, or he would never have permitted himself to have been interested for her. Captured as she was on the high-seas, filled with material to inflict wrong upon a nation with which Great Britain is at peace, I confess my astonishment at the interposition of her majesty's chargé d'affaires in the action of our courts. The case of the Bermuda is so transparently wrong as to admit of no doubt as to the final result in regard to her; but, were it otherwise, the Government of the United States is not only abundantly able to respond, but is always anxious to do right in matters of this description. We may be wronged, and experience bad faith from others, but these will never induce our courts or our Government to be unjust.

The opportunity is not an improper one for me to invite your attention to the conduct of the British colonial authorities in permitting her majesty's proclamation to be constantly disregarded, and good faith and the laws of neutrality to be persistently violated. Vessels, as is known to us and to the whole world, are constantly leaving certain ports in the British West Indies, avowedly to run our blockade and

furnish assistance to the insurgents in the criminal assault upon our Government. Nassau is notoriously an *entre port* for systematic arrangements to violate our blockade, where cargoes are interchanged, contraband of war transhipped, and vessels are received and fitted out despite the remonstrance of our consul, who has repeatedly brought these flagitious proceedings to the notice of the public authorities. So flagrant indeed was the case of the *Oreto*, that she was once or twice detained, and after the formality of a trial, most extraordinary in its character and results, was permitted to depart by the British courts, and, as is well known, directly after ran the blockade at Mobile.

But the colonial authorities are not alone in fault. More recently we have intelligence that the steamer 290, alias the *Alabama*, which our consul and our minister at London warned the British authorities was being prepared to depredate upon our commerce and make war upon our flag, but which, in spite of these remonstrances, they permitted to escape, has got abroad, and is seizing, sinking, and burning the property of our innocent merchants. Who is to be responsible for the devastation made by this rebel rover, which has never yet visited the ports of any other country but those of Great Britain, when the Government of that country was repeatedly admonished of her true character and purpose before she left its shores?

I know of no case in history that has a parallel in the enormity of the outrage committed, as between friendly nations, to that of this semi-piratical vessel from England which is now plundering and destroying our commerce. From the commencement of the insurrection, the insurgents who are making war upon our Government and endeavoring to subvert it, without a naval vessel of their own afloat or a port free of access, have gone to England—a power that is professedly on terms of amity with the United States—and there have experienced no difficulty in contracting for and procuring to be built and sent forth a cruiser, armed and laden with munitions of war, to make waste and destruction with the property of our citizens, who are wholly uninformed, and consequently wholly unprepared for such aggressive proceedings under any guise from Great Britain. This vessel which is committing these outrages upon peaceful commerce, it will be borne in mind, has never visited the waters of any nation but those of Great Britain, has never entered the port of any country but England. In England she was built, and from England she went forth on her lawless errand in violation of the proclaimed law and pledged faith of the Government of Great Britain, to commit havoc upon the commerce of a people who enjoyed, as they supposed, peaceful relations with that country.

On every principle of equity and right, morally and politically, the British nation should be held responsible for the losses which our citizens sustain by the depredations of this semi-piratical cruiser, which was built on British soil and went from a British port, against the remonstrance and protests of our minister and consul, to prey upon American commerce.

I do not permit myself to doubt that you have been attentive to these facts, and have duly presented them in the proper quarter, asserting our rights and our sense of the injury that our country and countrymen have received. But I have deemed it not inopportune nor improper in me to invite your especial attention to the subject, because there is no concealment of the fact that there are at this time vessels being built and others purchased and fitted out with arms and munitions and contraband of war in various places in Great Britain, notoriously to promote aggressive war against the United States.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

The sentiments and spirit of this document truly represented the opinions and feelings of the American people.

In the autumn of 1862, England manifested a very earnest disposition to increased activity in the suppression of the slave-trade. She forwarded a list of the vessels which, under the provisions of the new treaty, she was about to send to the African coast, and a copy of the instructions given them. The intention of the English Government appeared to be to withdraw a portion of our blockading fleet from that service and place them under the restricting clause of the "treaty," which confines the object of the search to the question whether the suspected vessel is a slaver. Of course, all vessels sent out especially under the "treaty" would be forbidden to search for contraband articles, and to this extent the blockading squadron would be diminished. The affair shows how exceedingly watchful the English officials were, and how eagerly they seized upon every circumstance which could possibly work an injury to our cause. The Secretary replied as follows:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 9, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your commu-

nications of the 17th and 26th insts., enclosing a copy of a letter from the British *chargé d'affaires*, communicating the instructions which it is intended to furnish the commanders of her Britannic majesty's cruisers who may be employed in carrying out the provisions of the recent slave-trade treaty between the United States and Great Britain, as well as lists of her majesty's several ships employed in the African, North American, and West Indian stations, whose commanders will be authorized to act under the treaty, and asking for a similar list of United States cruisers.

I have the honor to inform you that all of our cruisers are at present exercising the belligerent right of search, and it would be highly detrimental to the service and unjust to the country to detach any of them at the present moment from the duties on which they are engaged, and restrict their operations by instructions under the treaty for the present, or during the existence of hostilities. Under the unquestioned belligerent right of search, each and all of our naval vessels will exercise the rights which appertain to them as belligerents—will visit and search suspected vessels, not only within the localities prescribed by the treaty, but elsewhere; and, in the exercise of this belligerent right, they will not hesitate to seize slavers or other piratical craft that are abusing our flag.

To give our cruisers, now performing such general duties, instructions under the treaty, would be to limit their operations to a specific object, while the exigencies of the country require them to perform other necessary, legal, and legitimate duties. So far as it is practicable on our part to use the belligerent right of search incidentally in aid of the purposes of the treaty, we shall so use it.

The important privilege of visit and search, and in some cases of detention and capture, is conceded by each of the two Governments in this treaty, and offence cannot be taken at our waiving for a season the exercise of the privilege conceded. This waiver will not prevent British cruisers from searching and seizing suspected vessels claiming to be American, while those claiming to be English will also be searched by them. Besides this, our cruisers searching all vessels under the belligerent right, will of course capture all slavers which use or abuse the American flag, or adopt that of the rebels.

I do not propose during the existence of hostilities to impair the efficiency or usefulness of our cruisers as war-vessels by giving their commanders instructions under the treaty, for the reason that any naval officer acting under such instructions would be restrained from the general belligerent right of search—the instrument itself compels him to

declare, on boarding a vessel, that "the only object of the search is to ascertain whether the vessel is employed in the African slave-trade or is fitted up for that trade"—whereas, instead of confining our officers to that only object in the time of war, we have not a cruiser afloat whose commander is not under imperative orders to search all merchant-vessels for contraband of war. We cannot consent to abandon the belligerent right of search and seizure in the West Indies, where neutral obligations are disregarded and neutral flags are prostituted to aid the insurgents; consequently, I must for the present omit to issue instructions under the treaty which permits no commander having instructions under the treaty, to search a vessel in certain localities for any other purpose than that of detecting slavers.

Whenever the condition of affairs will permit us to set apart cruisers for the special service required, it will give me pleasure to furnish a list of them as requested, and to perform the duties which may devolve upon the Department for a strict execution of the treaty.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Hon. WILLIAM H. SEWARD, *Secretary of State.*

So soon as the stringency of the blockade was such that its pressure caused some distress along the coast, great efforts were made by the rebels, both through their earnest friends at the North and those who sought profit only, with no regard to the interests of their country, to establish a trade through special permits obtained from such army officers as could be induced to grant them. The following correspondence will throw much light upon the manner in which the rebels, to the astonishment of all not in the secret, were able to obtain so large an amount of supplies:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 11, 1862.*

SIR: I have received your dispatch No. 71, enclosing copy of correspondence between General Dix and yourself.

Your letter of the 8th inst., to General Dix, and the course pursued by you in regard to traffic and the ingress and egress of vessels, are correct and in conformity with your instructions and your duty. Until the blockade is raised or modified, it must be strictly maintained.

That there is distress in Norfolk and the whole insurrectionary region I doubt not. The object of the blockade is to destroy their traffic while in rebellion. The relief is in the hands of the people, who have

only to be loyal to be relieved. The case is not one of sympathy, but of duty.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. LEE,*

*commanding N. A. Blockading Squadron, Old Point Comfort, Va.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 24, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit for your perusal a dispatch (No. 98) which I have received from Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. Lee, with correspondence between that officer and General Dix, relative to traffic at Norfolk, which I will thank you to return after perusal.

If it be the policy of the Government to reopen trade with Norfolk, it should not, I think, be limited to such persons only as the officers of the Army may designate, but be free to all. A system of army permits cannot otherwise than lead to favoritism and demoralization. The blockade ought not thus to be abused and prostituted.

General Dix makes allusion to the "regulation of commerce," "revenue," "custom-house clearances," etc., as if they were consistent with a state of blockade, whereas the object of a blockade is to interrupt and destroy, for the time being, commercial intercourse. So long as it is continued, the Army will be put to some inconvenience, if it is honestly and faithfully enforced. If it is not so enforced, and in good faith, the demoralization of the Army will be likely to follow.

Until the blockade is raised, I think it not only the true policy but the duty of the Government to enforce it. If there is any modification, its benefits should be to all, and not restricted to a few.

From the large list of vessels furnished, and from information obtained from other sources, it is questionable whether it would not be better in every respect to open the port of Norfolk than to keep up what I fear would be but a sham blockade for the benefit of favorites.

From the letters and views of General Dix, so far as I can understand them, it would seem that he desires the naval vessels should be employed in restricting traffic, except to such persons as he and certain officers of the Army may permit, and those who have these permits are to export and import, and carry on general trade. This certainly is not blockade, but a perversion of it. My opinion is, that the blockade should be maintained in entire good faith with all, or that the port should be open to all. To depart from this rule will be to bring our whole blockade into disrepute. At no point should it be made a cover



for traffic by privileged parties, after solemn proclamation from the Executive to the whole world that commerce is interdicted.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Hon. S. P. CHASE, *Secretary of the Treasury.*

These things show how great and how varied were the difficulties which beset the Government in the midst of the war. They prove how much more formidable a civil contest is than a foreign war of similar proportions. A country knit together by all national, religious, commercial, and social ties, by common language and kindred, cannot be suddenly wrenched completely apart and the two divisions made as thoroughly hostile to each other as separate nations are when in a state of war. The Northern States, especially, went into the conflict with very little of animosity. Very many of our public men and officers in the Army and Navy were connected with the South by intimate and pleasant relations; many were inclined to sympathize with the South in her defence of slavery as against the anti-slavery movement of the North, and these sympathies could not be instantly chilled, and all these existing relations could not be severed at once. It is not therefore surprising that the feelings of some of our officers should have induced them to regard with pity the straitened circumstances of their former friends, and swerved them a little at times from the stern performance of duty to the country. The Navy Department, as is seen by the foregoing correspondence, felt bound to enforce the blockade, holding before the Southern people the true remedy for their sufferings, one always within their reach—a return to loyalty.

The trade with Matamoras, already spoken of, though exceedingly injurious to the Union cause, had nevertheless for a time the sanction of the Government, which freely gave clearances to vessels going nominally to Matamoras, but really laden with cargoes intended for Brownsville, and therefore for the use of the rebels. The temptation to obtain cotton in this manner was not easily resisted, and the well-known injury to the Union cause thus occasioned was readily overlooked when the

proceeding was indirectly sanctioned or permitted by the Government, which, as was assumed, could not be ignorant of the real destination of such cargoes. Before the war, it was usual to see five or six vessels lying off the mouth of the Rio Grande, representing the trade of Matamoras and Brownsville. After the establishment of the blockade, it was not an uncommon event that two hundred sail were there, waiting either to discharge or receive a cargo.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS.

HISTORY presents no parallel to the condition of affairs in this country just previous to the beginning of hostilities while the rebels were perfecting their plans. Under the very eye of the Government the conspirators were making active preparations for open rebellion, and these were going forward on all sides with no attempt at concealment, while no measures were taken to interfere with their operations. The preparatory work was on a scale commensurate with their large design, the creation of a great slave empire, which should ultimately include Mexico and the West India Islands. The rebel scheme of the war embraced four principal points: the seizure of the coast defences; a base at Richmond for operations against Washington and the more Northern cities; the occupation of the great natural fortress formed by the mountain region on the borders of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia; and the closing of the Mississippi. All this was nearly accomplished before actual hostilities began. The rebel leaders were permitted to choose their own methods of defence and attack, and the time when the conflict should commence. To the last hours before the opening of the great struggle, by the assault on Sumter, Mr. Lincoln was unwilling to believe that there would be war, and the traitors went forward unhindered with the work of preparation. When the South struck the first blow, she deemed herself ready at all points. It must be conceded that the rebel lines of defence were arranged with great military skill, and one of the most important and formidable features in the plan was the effectual closing of the Mississippi. From

Cairo to the "Passes" the great commercial artery of the continent was so effectually sealed that it felt no longer a single throb from the pulses of Northern traffic.

Nothing from above could go below Cairo, or, at most, Columbus; and no vessel from the ocean could pass Forts Jackson and Philip. The great West was excluded from all the lower river markets, and from the Gulf; while, from the great river and all its noble tributaries below the Ohio, the rebels drew unlimited supplies. The vast and fertile regions west of the Mississippi, and especially Texas, were remote from the theatre of the war, and therefore untouched by its ravages; and the cultivation of the soil, in extensive tracts, went forward as if no conflict was going on in the land. Texas supplied the rebel army with immense quantities of beef, while large amounts of the cotton and other staples of these regions reached the markets of Europe in spite of the blockade, at least during the earlier part of the war.

The control, therefore, of the Mississippi was absolutely essential to the rebel government, while it was also of vital necessity, in the plan for the restoration of the Union, that the North should regain possession of this great central continental stream. The conspirators had left nothing undone that it was possible for them to perform. From the forts below New Orleans to Cairo, there was scarcely an available point on either shore where they had not planted a fort or a battery. Many of these, as the event proved, were exceedingly formidable defences, in the construction of which natural advantages and military science had been most skilfully combined. To open the Mississippi, to restore and maintain upon it, from the Ohio to the sea, free and safe navigation, was certainly among the most difficult and dangerous military enterprises of the war—perhaps it may be safely said, of modern times.

The first plan of the Government was to sweep away the barriers from the great river by land forces descending from above, from the mouth of the Ohio, without the coöperation of the Navy. The design was merely to employ some transports as a part of an army expedition. This has been partly explained in the previous volume. The Mississippi flotilla, as it was called, was not at first under the direction of the Navy De-

partment, but was entirely controlled by the Secretary of War, who, as heretofore stated, received the proposition to employ gunboats on the Western waters with apparent indifference; and it was not till the progress of events had shown that an iron-clad fleet was absolutely necessary in the reduction of the river forts, that the flotilla was turned over to the Navy Department, and became a part of the Navy of the United States. While the War Department placed its chief dependence for opening the river upon the movement from above, the Navy Department, while earnestly coöperating with this, believed that the work would not be quickly or effectually done, unless New Orleans and the forts below could be captured by an assault from the sea. The Secretary therefore turned his attention to the fitting out of a squadron for an attack upon New Orleans. In military circles little confidence was felt in the success of such an undertaking. The nature of the rebel defences was understood, so far at least as their principal features were concerned; and their works were believed by many, perhaps most, to be impregnable to any naval assault. The feeling of the French officer, mentioned in the first volume, who condemned Farragut for capturing forts which, according to all military reasoning and rule could not be taken, was shared in by others. McClellan showed so much indifference in regard to the enterprise, that it became necessary to appeal to the President himself before even a promise could be obtained of a coöperating land force. It was thought that at least fifteen thousand men would be needed for the purpose, but McClellan seemed unwilling to spare them from the army around Washington; and, while admitting that it would be well to make the experiment, failed to give it any earnest support.

The attention of the Navy Department was turned to this subject soon after the capture of the forts at Hilton Head, and some preliminary preparations were made for the movement. Two causes favored somewhat the design. The rebels felt almost entire confidence in their defences below the city; and the Government succeeded in directing public attention to other points as the objects of the next attack.

It was, however, midwinter before any definite arrangement was made with the War Department for the needed land force,

and it was proposed that all should be ready by the 22d of February. General Butler was at that time engaged in raising troops in Massachusetts, and had under his command about six thousand men. These raw recruits McClellan proposed to send forward to aid the Navy in the capture of New Orleans. This arrangement was made, as has been stated, without the knowledge of the Secretary of War. About this time Mr. Stanton was placed in the War Office; and the plan having been made known to him, he cordially approved of it, and agreed to furnish the necessary troops. Some Western regiments were soon after added to those under General Butler, and Ship Island was selected as the common rendezvous for the land forces. On the 20th of January, 1862, the following letter was addressed by the Secretary of the Navy to Flag-Officer D. G. Farragut:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *January 20, 1862.*

SIR: When the Hartford is in all respects ready for sea, you will proceed to the Gulf of Mexico with all practicable dispatch, and communicate with Flag-officer W. W. McKean, who is directed by the enclosed dispatch to transfer to you the command of the Western Gulf blockading squadron. . . . There will be attached to your squadron a fleet of bomb-vessels, and armed steamers enough to manage them, all under command of Commander D. D. Porter, who will be directed to report to you. As fast as these vessels are got ready they will be sent to Key West to await the arrival of all, and the commanding officers, who will be permitted to organize and practise with them at that port.

When these formidable mortars arrive, and you are completely ready, you will collect such vessels as can be spared from the blockade and proceed up the Mississippi River, and reduce the defences which guard the approaches to New Orleans, when you will appear off that city and take possession of it under the guns of your squadron, and hoist the American flag thereon, keeping possession until troops can be sent to you. If the Mississippi expedition from Cairo shall not have descended the river, you will take advantage of the panic to push a strong force up the river to take all their defences in the rear. As you have expressed yourself satisfied with the force given to you, and as many more powerful vessels will be added before you can commence operations, the Department and the country will require of you success. . . . There are other operations, of minor importance, which will commend themselves to your judgment and skill, but which

must not be allowed to interfere with the great object in view—the certain capture of the city of New Orleans.

Destroy the armed barriers which these deluded people have raised up against the power of the United States Government, and shoot down those who war against the Union ; but cultivate with cordiality the first returning reason, which is sure to follow your success.

Respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES.

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*appointed to command Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

On the 10th of February the flag-officer was again confidentially addressed as follows :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *February 10, 1862.*

SIR : I enclose to you herewith sketches from the United States Engineer Bureau relative to the works on the Mississippi River ; also a memorandum prepared by General Barnard, United States Army, who constructed Fort St. Philip. The most important operation of the war is confided to yourself and your brave associates, and every light possible to obtain should be carefully considered before putting into operation the plan which your judgment dictates.

It is reported that nineteen feet of water can be carried over the bar. If this be true, the frigate Mississippi can be got over without much difficulty ; the Colorado draws about twenty-two feet ; she lightens one inch to twenty-four tons ; her keel is about two feet deep. The frigate Wabash, when in New York, in 1858, drew, without her spar-deck guns, stores, water-casks, tanks, and coal (excepting thirty tons), aft, twenty feet eight inches ; forward, sixteen feet ; or, on an even keel, eighteen feet four inches. This would indicate a very easy passage for this noble vessel ; and if it be *possible* to get these two steamers over, and perhaps a sailing vessel also, you will take care to use every exertion to accomplish it. The powerful tugs in the bomb flotilla will afford the necessary pulling power. The tops of these large steamers are from thirty to fifty feet above the fort, and command the parapets and interior completely with howitzers and musketry. The Wachusett, at Boston ; the Oreida, Richmond, Varuna, and Dakota, at New York ; and the Iroquois, from the West Indies, are ordered to report to you with all practicable dispatch, and every gunboat which can be got ready in time will have the same orders. All of the bomb-vessels have sailed, and the steamers to accompany them are being prepared with great dispatch. It is believed the last will be off by the 16th instant.

Eighteen thousand men are being sent to the Gulf to coöperate in the movements which will give to the arms of the United States full possession of the ports within the limits of your command. You will, however, carry out your instructions with regard to the Mississippi and Mobile without any delay beyond that imposed upon you by your own careful preparation. A division from Ship Island will probably be ready to occupy the forts that will fall into your hands. The Department relies upon your skill to give direction to the powerful force placed at your disposal, and upon your personal character to infuse a hearty co-operation amongst your officers, free from unworthy jealousies. If successful, you open the way to the sea for the great West, never again to be closed. The rebellion will be riven in the centre, and the flag to which you have been so faithful will recover its supremacy in every State.

Very respectfully, etc.,                      GIDEON WELLES.

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. N.,*

*commanding West Gulf Blockading Squadron, Ship Island.*

The readers of this history will of course desire to know something of the life and previous services of the man who, so soon after this, won for himself a foremost name among the naval heroes of his age.\*

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\* The Farragut family is said to have been of Spanish extraction, and the branch of it from which the admiral descended was settled in the Island of Minorca, and there his father was born. He came to America during our Revolutionary War, and like many other noble foreigners, sympathizing with the cause of liberty, he joined our army, and for his meritorious services was, during the war, promoted to the rank of major. After the close of the war, having married a lady of North Carolina, he went to East Tennessee and established himself in the vicinity of Knoxville. There, in 1801, was born DAVID GLASCOE FARRAGUT, the future hero of New Orleans.

If, after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the far-seeing statesmen of Europe had been asked to select the one who would be the next chief figure in history, no one would have pointed to the youth Washington, the boy-surveyor on the banks of the Shenandoah; and if, after the War of the Revolution was over, men had been asked, "Whose name sixty years hence will stand foremost among our naval heroes?" no one would have selected the blue-eyed little son of a foreigner, playing by that humble home in the forests of Tennessee. In each case, the minds of men would have turned to distinguished leaders or families then on the stage. Men are slow to believe in the power of the apparently weak things of the world.

David's father and Captain Porter, who afterward commanded the *Essex*, were intimate friends, and, through Porter's influence and kindness, the boy was appointed a midshipman when only nine years old. When war with England was declared, Captain Porter took command of the now famous *Essex* frigate, and young Farragut, then eleven years old, was taken with him. Doubtless the bold, determined char-



Such was the man who was selected, in the providence of God, to decide one of the grandest issues of the war. His was the perilous task, and his also the glory, of striking the main blow which gave back the Mississippi and its great commercial city to the Union, and severed the traitor confederacy from the

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acter of this commander had great influence in moulding that of the boy-midshipman, for Porter was daring almost to the verge of recklessness, and his assertion of the rights and his defence of the honor of his country were so enthusiastic as to kindle in others the heroic fire which burned in his own heart.

The patriotism of the officers of the Navy was intense, and such was the indignation against England, caused by her insulting and continual outrages upon our merchant-vessels, that the feeling on board our ships was, "We will conquer or die!" The fearless yet gentlemanly manner in which Captain Porter met the brutal, insolent challenge of Sir James Yeo, commanding the English frigate *Southampton*, of course helped to give a high tone to the young midshipman's mind, and to cower before an enemy or yield to an obstacle formed no part of his training.

He was with Porter in the *Essex* when he captured the *Alert*, and great was the enthusiasm of the young officer, and boundless his confidence in the skill and courage of an American crew, when he saw a British ship which bore down on the *Essex*, with three exultant cheers, as if sure of victory, sent to the bottom in less than ten minutes, and before the guns of the *Essex* were warm. Amid such scenes, and inspired by such a commander, an ardent boy would be educated to believe defeat impossible for an American ship.

He was soon after taught another lesson in bold adventure. Commodore Bainbridge having gone out from Boston with the *Constitution* and *Hornet*, Captain Porter was ordered to join him with the *Essex*; but having failed to meet with Bainbridge at any of the places which had been designated, Porter determined to plan a cruise for himself. He conceived, and at once put in execution, the bold design of doubling Cape Horn, and passing around into the Pacific, in the hope of winning fame or fortune, perhaps both, on that distant field where no one would expect an American cruiser, because there was no port from which we could safely obtain supplies, as England then dictated law to please herself for every weak neutral power. As monarch of the seas, she assumed to be supreme law-giver for the ocean.

Captain Porter made some unimportant captures, and then visited the *Marquesas* for the purpose of refitting his vessel. Here the adventurous, dashing spirit of the man was exhibited in a novel manner for a naval officer. The natives, at first peaceable, fearing the power of a war-ship, became familiar with her presence in time, and, as their fears wore away, their desire for plunder and the usual savage thirst for blood grew too strong to be repressed, and they formed a design to capture the ship and murder the crew. Porter adopted an unexpected but very decisive measure. Placing his ship in a position where she could not easily be attacked with any hope of success, he landed the most of his crew and marched inland, driving the astonished savages before him, till he reached their villages, and then, while they took refuge in a rude fortification, he burned their dwellings, and having thoroughly frightened them, he returned to his ship. Farragut said he was not allowed to go with the expedition because his legs were too short for marching.

main sources of its life. It was his fortune also, on this as on a subsequent occasion, to show, by what has been well termed his "*sublime audacity*," how a fleet of wooden steamers may pass at close range, without fatal injury, the guns of a formidable fort. Assisted as he was by the well-directed shells from Por-

It is quite clear that the school in which the youth was growing up was one in which, if there was any heroic element in him, he would be educated for bold exploits. Knowing how much he owed to the kindness of his commander, and admiring, as every brave spirit naturally would, the distinguishing traits of his character, and sharing with him the glory of success so far as a boy could, Captain Porter exerted upon him a power which shaped him into the image of himself.

The Essex was soon after blockaded in the neutral harbor of Valparaiso by an English frigate, superior to her in size and metal, and a sloop-of-war, which was nearly the equal in force of the American frigate. The two were almost double her strength. For several weeks Porter endeavored to get an opportunity of fighting the frigate singly, but in vain. The English commander was unwilling to risk his ship or reputation in such a battle. After a brief experience, the British officers were not anxious to meet a Yankee vessel on equal terms. Captain Porter could not long endure such a restraint upon his movements, and he resolved to run this blockade or fight his way through.

In an attempt to leave the harbor, the Essex was struck by a squall, in which her maintopmast was carried away, and the frigate was so crippled that she could neither proceed to sea nor return to her former anchorage. In this unfortunate condition Porter ran back within a mile and a half of the castle, far within the limits of neutral water, and anchored his vessel there, where, by the rules of international law, disputed by none, and respected by all but England, he should have been safe from attack. But Captain Hillyar bore down upon a disabled foe, with a force nearly double that of the American frigate when in her best condition, and, trampling upon all law and all right, opened upon her the broadsides of both his vessels. It was one of those many outrages which England has committed on every sea, which are foul blots on her national name—wrongs which she must in some manner atone for, not because man is revengeful, but because God is just.

Exactly parallel to this attack upon a brave man when unable to defend himself, and when a true man would have scorned to strike a blow, was the conduct of England toward us in the late rebellion. Just when our ship of state was crippled for the moment by the sudden fierce cyclone of civil war, and our strength was tasked to the utmost to save her from going down, Britain seized that hour of sharp distress, to inflict an injury which she expected and intended to be fatal. When England repents of these things and brings forth fruits meet for repentance, let her be forgiven; till then, let the past be "*freshly remembered*," not for purposes of retaliation, but as an admonition for the future. If we would be safe hereafter, we must hold a power at command that France and England combined will not dare provoke.

A particular description of the world-renowned fight between the Essex and her two antagonists would be out of place in the sketch of the life of one who at the time was only a boy of about eleven years old, though he performed the part of a very noble boy.

ter's mortar fleet, it was still a most noble exhibition of what courage and daring can accomplish.

As life is not a bundle of accidents or events bearing no relation to each other, but a regular development, in which each scene grows naturally out from the preceding one, so that the man, though retaining throughout the original character which each individual receives from his Creator, is so moulded by circumstances as to bear at maturity the stamp which was put upon the child, who shall say how much of the iron will, the calm but resistless enthusiasm, the courage on which battle's most terrible shape made no impression, how much of the heroic *man* was the inevitable unfolding of the germ which God created, and what was due to the discipline of events?

It is doubtless true that education bestows upon no man capacity or attribute of any kind; it stretches no man beyond the original measure which God has bestowed at first, so that a man small by nature is never made a great man by education; but the amount and direction of the development of original powers is determined mainly by culture. The *man* Farragut, therefore, who pushed his ships through solid sheets of flame and shot and shell, was but the boy Farragut unfolded, matured, and shaped by the stern and romantic training of events. The boy-midshipman, who trod with Porter the deck of the Essex during that most desperate fight, who could do his duty firmly amid such a scene, was being shaped even then into the man who could pass the New Orleans forts and conquer at Mobile. So, also, those wild adventures with Porter in the West Indies, their perilous exploits among the pirates, educated him to deeds of daring, and to expect that nothing would prove impossible to *dash* and courage. He once said to a company, of which the writer was one, "I would as soon have a paper ship as an iron-clad; only give me *men* to fight her." That expression was the key to his character, and the explanation of his success. •

Admiral (then Captain) Farragut, after having been detained some time at Key West, reached Ship Island on the 20th of February, 1862, and at once commenced his preparations for the proposed attack. The first difficulty was, to get the large vessels over the bar at the head of the passes of the Mississippi.

This is the point where the river separates into several branches in its passage to the sea, and in each of these, as a matter of course, a bar is formed at or near the point of division. These channels are called "Passes," the deepest of which then were the "Southwest Pass" and "Pass à l'Outre." It was known that before the war there was sufficient water on the bar for the passage even of such a frigate as the Colorado or the Wabash; and it was intended, as stated in the Secretary's letter, to take both these noble vessels up to the forts. But, after the beginning of the war, and the establishment of the blockade, the water grew shoaler on the bar, because the channel was no longer kept open by the daily passage of large vessels, and the officers of the expedition were much disappointed in not finding the depth of water reported by the coast survey and pilots who were familiar with the passes. It was thought to be very important to get the large frigates Colorado and Wabash up to the forts, for the reason that their tops would be about fifty feet above the forts, and from them the whole interior of the works could be swept by howitzers and musketry. As there was only fifteen feet of water on the bar, it was found impossible to get the Colorado over, and the attempt was abandoned. The admiral had therefore at command the following force with which to attack the forts: The Hartford (flag-ship), Commander Wainwright; Brooklyn, Captain Craven; Richmond, Commander Alden; Pensacola, Captain Morris; Mississippi, Commander Melancton Smith; Scioto, Lieutenant-Commanding Donaldson; Iroquois, Commander De Camp; Kennebec, Lieutenant-Commanding Russell; Pinola, Lieutenant-Commanding Crosby; Itasca, Lieutenant-Commanding Caswell; Winona, Lieutenant-Commanding Nichols; Cayuga, Lieutenant-Commanding Harrison; Oneida, Commander Lee; Varuna, Commander Boggs; Katahdin, Lieutenant-Commanding Preble; Kineo, Lieutenant-Commanding Ransom; Wissahickon, Lieutenant-Commanding A. Smith.

In addition to these vessels were twenty-one mortar schooners and several steamers attached to this mortar-flotilla, all under the command of Vice-Admiral (then Commander) David D. Porter. At this point Admiral Porter first appears as a prominent actor in the war of the rebellion, and here is the proper place to pre-

sent some account of the early life of the man who, from that time, has occupied so distinguished a position in the American Navy. The sketch here given was kindly furnished by the admiral's secretary, and may therefore be relied upon as correct. From the time of the beginning of the rebellion, the history of the war itself, in which he took such an active part, is the best record of that portion of the admiral's life.\*

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\* DAVID D. PORTER, Rear-Admiral United States Navy, was born June 8, 1818, in the town of Chester, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. He received the first rudiments of education at that place, and entered Columbia College, in the City of Washington, in 1824, at the age of eleven years. The same year he accompanied his father, Commodore David Porter, to the West Indies, in pursuit of pirates, and there imbibed his first taste for sea-life.

In 1826 Commodore Porter took command of the Mexican navy, and appointed his son David a midshipman in that service. The latter, after spending one year in the city of Mexico in acquiring a knowledge of the Spanish language, took active service afloat with his father, who sailed with the Mexican fleet for the coast of Cuba. The fleet, for the want of supplies, being unable to go to sea from Key West, Commodore Porter fitted out several small prizes, in one of which, with his cousin D. H. Porter as captain, young Porter sailed to destroy the Spanish commerce around the Island of Cuba. After a cruise of sixty days, and making many narrow escapes, the prize-schooner *Esmeralda* returned to Key West, having destroyed thirty of the enemy's vessels, and laden with sugar and coffee taken from the captured coasters. The crew of the *Esmeralda*, twenty-nine in number, while the vessel was on her return, mutinied, and attempted to take possession of her; but her commander, D. H. Porter, a powerful and determined man, cut some of the mutineers down and shot several of them. They were then put in irons, and the vessel brought to Key West, the captain, Midshipman Porter, and a faithful Swede, being the only navigators.

In 1827 Commodore Porter returned with the Mexican fleet to Vera Cruz, and fitted out afresh for a new expedition, having on the first occasion almost destroyed the coast commerce of Cuba.

Midshipman David D. Porter was detailed to the brig *Guerrero* with his former captain, D. H. Porter. The *Guerrero* was built in New York, by Henry Eckford, was a fine vessel, and mounted twenty-two guns. She sailed in June, 1827, for the coast of Cuba, and on sighting the island on the fourteenth day out, a large convoy was discovered in shore, in charge of two brigs-of-war. The *Guerrero* was immediately cleared for action, and chase given to the enemy. The Spaniards and their convoy ran into the port of Little Mariel, fifteen miles west of Havana. This snug harbor was defended by shoals and a two-gun fort; but although the two brigs got in and got springs on their cables, the *Guerrero* ran in and anchored on the outside and commenced the action, which lasted one hour and a half. The brigs were completely dismantled and cut to pieces by the *Guerrero's* shot. The fort still kept up a galling fire, and the Mexican brig was obliged to haul out of range, the captain intending to go in at night with boats and finish the adventure. In the mean time, however, the

A mortar-fleet of twenty-one vessels, each carrying a mortar that threw a 13-inch shell, was one of the features of the war, which shows the great scale upon which it was conducted. These mortars, with the powerful armed tugs to tow and man-

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firing had been heard in Havana, and a large sixty-four gun frigate, the *Lealtad*, slipped her cables and put to sea.

The *Guerrero* was standing in shore to take possession of her prizes, when the frigate hove in sight, coming on with a fine breeze, while the Mexican brig lay becalmed. The two Spanish brigs, named respectively the *Marte* and the *Amelia*, were so knocked to pieces that they were never used again in the Spanish navy; they mounted, together with the fort, six more guns than the *Guerrero*.

The frigate finally came up with the *Guerrero*, and one of the most desperate and unequal battles on record took place between the two vessels, which ended in the capture of the brig after a fight of two hours and thirty minutes. The latter did not surrender until all her masts had been shot away and she was in a sinking condition. Out of one hundred and eighty men, eighty-six were killed and wounded. The captain was killed, and all the officers were wounded, and there was not a shot left in the locker to fire. A Mexican midshipman attempted to blow the vessel up, to keep her from falling into the hands of the enemy, but was fortunately prevented from carrying out his design. Young Porter was badly hurt in the first fight, but performed the duty of captain's aid in the second battle, in which he was again wounded.

The Mexican brig, after her capture, was towed into Havana, where the officers and crew were imprisoned in a filthy hulk at the base of the Moro castle, where they were kept many months in close confinement, suffering much both in mind and body, but having the consolation to know that the Spanish frigate had lost more men than they had, and was finally dismasted at sea, owing to the injuries her spars had received during the fight.

Owing to ill-health, Midshipman Porter was finally allowed to go to Vera Cruz on parole, where, finding no chance of getting exchanged, he returned to the United States. After going to school one year, he obtained an appointment as midshipman in the United States Navy in 1829, and sailed with Captain Alexander Wadsworth in the *Constellation* for the Mediterranean. In 1832 he joined the frigate *United States*, flag-ship of Commodore Patterson, and spent three years in her, when he returned to the United States to stand his examination. From the time of his passing his examination until his promotion to lieutenant he was employed in the Coast Survey, and sailed in the Congress frigate, in 1840, to the Mediterranean and coast of Brazil. On his return from this cruise, Lieutenant Porter was employed at the Naval Observatory under Lieutenant Maury.

In 1846 he was sent by Mr. Buchanan, then Secretary of State, to the Dominican Republic, in the *Island of Hayti*, to ascertain the exact condition of affairs in that country. Lieutenant Porter was three months on the island, and during that time travelled nineteen hundred miles on horseback, taking the census of every town, and returning with much information useful to the Government. During his absence the war between the United States and Mexico broke out, and he applied for immediate service afloat. He was ordered to proceed to New Orleans and raise men for Commodore Conner's fleet. This duty Lieutenant Porter performed, and afterward took

age them, had a very important work assigned them in the plan of the attack, as will hereafter appear.

At length the whole squadron, including the mortar-schooners, was ready to proceed; but when the "Passes" were reached,

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the men to Vera Cruz. He was there ordered as first lieutenant of the steamer Spitfire, Captain Tatnall. Lieutenant Porter found great difficulty in getting Commodore Conner to order him into service, the commodore not liking his full whiskers, which the Lieutenant declined to part with, never having shaved more than once or twice in his life.

Lieutenant Porter was with Captain Tatnall as first lieutenant of the Spitfire, when Tatnall attacked the castle of San Juan de Ulloa, and the town batteries. The little fleet of four vessels inflicted much damage on the town. The Spitfire fortunately only received one shot during the action. A few days afterward the Spitfire again attacked the town, and did material service to the army by withdrawing the Mexican fire from our batteries on shore. No vessel performed more active service than the Spitfire while Lieutenant Porter was in her. At the advance of Commodore Perry on Tabasco, the Mexicans had barricaded the river, and it was determined to land the troops or sailors, eighteen hundred in number, and march upon the city of Tabasco; but the Spitfire, regardless of the obstructions, made a dash through them, and pushed on up the river in advance of the landing-party, amid the hearty cheers of all. Eight miles up, the Spitfire encountered a heavy fort commanding the river. This fort mounted eight heavy guns, the Spitfire only one heavy gun, 8-inch, and two 32-pounders. The first shot from the fort cut the steamer's wheel in two, but the little vessel sped on, firing rapidly, and gained the rear of the battery, where, letting go her anchor, she soon cleared the works. Lieutenant Porter, under the fire of the steamer's guns, boarded the fort with sixty-eight men, and carried it. The landing-party arrived four hours afterward, and found the town and batteries of Tabasco in possession of the Spitfire and the Scorpion, a steamer commanded by Captain Bigelow, which vessel came up behind the Spitfire.

Lieutenant Sidney Smith Lee commanded the Spitfire, and was ordered to command the steamer Mississippi. Lieutenant Porter was then given command of the Spitfire, which command he retained while the American forces held Tabasco, and until ill-health obliged him to return home in 1848. After the fall of Vera Cruz, Lieutenant Porter was engaged in every operation that took place during the Mexican War, and was first lieutenant of the steamer Spitfire, the leading vessel, when our little fleet of steamers fought their way up Tuspan River, and captured the town of Tuspan.

On the return of Lieutenant Porter to the United States, he was again ordered to the Coast Survey, but having been offered the command of the "Pacific Mail Steamship Company's" steamer Panama, he took charge of her and sailed for the Pacific, through the Strait of Magellan. He left the steamer at Panama, after a most successful voyage, and returned to the United States, where he was placed in command of George Law's steamer, the Georgia, which he commanded successfully three years without an accident of any kind. Having got into a difficulty with the Spanish authorities in Havana, in which he made them respect the American flag, he left the company by which he was employed, and took command of the steamer

the almost insuperable difficulty, already mentioned, arrested them—that of getting the large vessels over the bar. The idea of taking up the Colorado was soon abandoned; but as no others could be spared without endangering the success of the expedition, every possible preparation was made to get the remaining heavy steamers through the shoal water and into the main channel of the river. After a protracted trial at Pass à l'Ostre with the Brooklyn, the attempt was abandoned. She was then taken to Southwest Pass, and there also she grounded; but was finally dragged off and pulled through the mud by the smaller steamers, those of the mortar-fleet especially doing effective work in all the severe and anxious labor of working the vessels through.

After every expedient had been tried, it was with great difficulty that the draught of the Mississippi and Pensacola could be so far reduced as to make it even probable that they could be carried over. They were obliged to take every thing out of the Mississippi except coal enough to carry her to the bar, and then she was dragged and pushed, with great labor, through one foot of mud. During these operations there was much bad

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Golden Age, belonging to the "Australian Steamship Company." He then proceeded to England and made a successful voyage thence to Australia in fifty-six days, thirty days quicker than it had ever been made before. Lieutenant Porter ran the steamer Golden Age six months on the Australian coast, and then crossed the Pacific with a load of English passengers, and arrived safely at Panama. Having taken the Chagres fever, he was obliged to return home, where it was many months before he regained his health. He was then selected by Jefferson Davis, the Secretary of War, to go abroad to import camels. Lieutenant Porter successfully imported two shiploads, eighty-four in all, and on his return, in 1859, was ordered to the navy-yard at Portsmouth, N. H.

Just before the breaking out of the War of the Rebellion, Lieutenant Porter was ordered to bring the frigate Constitution to Annapolis, and was about proceeding to California to take charge of the Coast Survey vessels there, when the Southern States seceded. At the time when the Fort Sumter expedition was being fitted out, as has been already stated, under Captain Fox, Admiral Porter was sent for by Secretary Seward, and consulted in regard to an attempt to relieve Fort Pickens. The result of the interview was that he was selected to command the Powhatan, which, as was heretofore related, was secretly detached from Captain Fox's squadron, and ordered to Fort Pickens. The fort was relieved by the Navy Department before the arrival of the Powhatan, and this vessel then went in pursuit of the Sumter privateer, and Admiral Porter showed his usual energy and perseverance by steaming ten thousand miles in pursuit of this pirate. On his return from this cruise he was requested to fit out and take charge of the mortar-fleet destined for the attack on the Mississippi forts. His subsequent career appears in the history of the war.



weather, and heavy fogs for days together impeded their work; and there was great joy when the perplexing, wearisome task at length was done.

When all the vessels were over the bar and ready to move up the river, the first important work was to seek a proper position for the mortar-schooners, as the intention was to injure the forts by a bombardment as much as possible, before the general attack by the ships. As these light vessels would be quickly demolished by the heavy shot from the forts, if they were struck, it was absolutely necessary, and yet very difficult, so to locate them that their own fire would be effectual, while they at the same time would not be directly exposed to the guns of the forts. The banks on both sides of the river are low, and the land flat, and they could not therefore use the common expedient of placing the mortars in a ravine or behind a ridge, so as to shield them from a direct fire. It was evident that recourse must be had to some other method of concealment and shelter.

The first thing to be done, however, was to determine accurately the distances of certain points from the forts in order that the mortars might be properly placed, so that the shells would strike the works. This could only be done by making an accurate survey of the river, and marking distances with precision. When all was ready for this work, Mr. Gerdes, assistant on the Coast Survey, was directed to proceed in the steamer *Sachem*, and make a minute survey from Wiley Jump to the forts. This gentleman detached Mr. Oltmanns and Mr. Harris for the work, and they proceeded in boats to perform the dangerous task. The *Owasco* was also sent forward to protect the surveyors, so far as possible, in their work. They performed their duty rapidly and well, but in constant peril, for they were compelled to lie often under the direct fire of the forts, while they were also exposed to riflemen concealed in the bushes that lined the banks. In three days, however, they triangulated seven miles of the river, including the positions of the forts, and marked down with precision the points where the mortars could be located so as to make their fire effectual.

At a distance of about two miles from the forts, on the south bank of the river, was a point, between which and the forts was

a wood about sixty rods wide, thick with various kinds of undergrowth, and darkened by interlacing vines. It was impossible to see through this belt of forest from the rebel works, and very difficult, to say the least, to send through it shot or shell. There was also another advantage offered by this leafy screen. If the enemy should obtain the range, and his missiles plough through the forest, the schooners could change their position without being observed, and so baffle the gunners of the forts.

There, behind the concealing forest, and about two miles from the enemy's works, it was determined to place the formidable mortars, with the exception of one division, commanded by Lieutenant W. W. Queen, which was anchored on the northeast shore, in a more exposed position, but where the mortars could be fired with greater precision. For the hulls of those placed behind the wood, the trees were a sufficient screen; but there was danger that the upper spars and ropes might be visible through openings in the branches. To remedy this, an ingenious device was adopted. The masts, the spars, and ropes of all the fleet were so dressed, that at a little distance it was impossible to distinguish them from the green branches and vines by which they were surrounded. Neither the vessels, therefore, nor their spars or rigging, could be discovered even by glasses from the forts. The schooners on the north bank of the river were, as before stated, more exposed; still, they were so hidden among the tall reeds and willows of the shore, and so disguised by boughs and vines tied to their masts and rigging, as to make it very difficult for the enemy to determine their exact position, and the accuracy of their fire, under the circumstances, was very creditable to their skill as gunners.

Each vessel having been placed in position by the officers who had conducted the survey, there were nineteen huge 13-inch mortars ready to hurl their ponderous, hissing globes into the doomed forts, and the fleet of war-steamers and gunboats waiting until the works should be somewhat weakened before making their attack. With all the advantages for concealment which have been mentioned, through which the men, feeling safe, could work coolly, and though firing over accurately-measured ground, this bombardment by the mortar-boats was a somewhat uncertain business. At the distance of nearly two

miles, Fort Jackson, the principal object, presented but a small mark, and the currents of air shifting their direction and varying in strength, affected the flight of the bombs, so that it was not certain that the charge and the aim which sent one shell into the fort would cause the next to fall in the same place. If a calculation was made for the pressure of the wind, then it might be that the force thus exerted on the shell in its passage might be more or less than was estimated, and it might for this reason fall wide of the mark.

The schooners which were moored behind the wood afforded no opportunity for a direct aim, and the mortars were guided by some intermediate object, often fixed to the masthead of the vessel, in the true line of fire. Besides this, the fuses were so imperfect that it was difficult to time them, and many burst in the air; and when the shells were fired without cutting the fuses, they would sink sometimes twenty feet into the soft ground on which the forts stood, and in their explosion, at that depth, did little harm, though they shook the ground like a small earthquake, serving somewhat, perhaps, the purpose of demoralizing the garrison. Under such circumstances, it is remarkable that so much was effected by the shells from the mortars, and the damage done shows the skill and science with which this part of the attack was conducted. On the first day the schooners fired more than fourteen hundred shells, and the firing was said to be more accurate than on the subsequent days. Considering the manner in which the mortar-boats were concealed, the fire from the forts was well directed. At mid-day, after opening the attack, the division on the north shore was in so much danger from the rapid and accurate fire, that it was thought prudent to move some of them. The leading schooner was struck by a 120-pound shell, which crashed through her cabin and injured the magazine, and another had received a 10-inch shot near the water-line. They were moved about two hundred yards astern, and thus thrown out of range, a fact which the gunners at the fort did not discover for several hours.

At 5 o'clock that evening a fire was seen burning in the fort, and it was afterward ascertained that this was the citadel in flames, that the clothing of the troops and the commissary

stores were destroyed, and great alarm was felt by the garrison on account of the danger to the magazine. It was afterward thought that if these facts had been known at the time, and the firing had been continued during the night, the forts might have been compelled to surrender. As it was, ignorant of the extent of damage done, and knowing that his men greatly needed food and rest, Admiral Porter, a little after sunset, gave the order to cease firing. Such had been the accuracy of the aim from the forts, that it was thought proper to remove the six schooners from the north shore and place them also behind the screen of the belt of woodland. At 2 o'clock in the morning of the second day this was done, and the rebels encouraged themselves with the belief that they had been sunk.

The rebels had neglected nothing which ingenuity could devise for the security of the forts and the destruction of a hostile fleet. The armament of the fortifications was a very formidable one, consisting of some heavy rifles and 10-inch columbiads, besides the more common guns for such forts. In addition to this, there were thirteen armed steamers, the steam-battery Louisiana, mounting sixteen heavy guns, and the ram Manassas. There was also a very strong barrier thrown across the river at point-blank range from the forts. This was formed of a boom made of timber, nearly three feet square, locked firmly together; and then an immense iron chain, supported by eight hulks of schooners moored, was stretched across the channel. These schooners had each a long spar trailing astern, so that no boat could pass from one hulk to another without going down around the end of the spar and then up against the swift current. Not satisfied with these defences, they had made extensive preparations for sending fire-ships down among our vessels, and seemed confident that they should thus destroy the fleet. From the pertinacity with which these experiments were made, it was clear that the rebels were very unwilling to believe that they could not succeed.

The first fire-raft sent down had certainly an unpleasant aspect. Some forty vessels were lying, without much regard to order, in the swift current of the Mississippi, where it was not very easy to shift the position, and an immense body of flame, that lighted up the river, the shores, and the sky, moving

swiftly down among them. It was a flat-boat, one hundred and fifty feet long, fifty feet broad, and eight feet deep. This was filled with pitch-pine knots and rosin. It was certainly pardonable if even brave men felt anxious as they saw this huge mass of fire sweeping right toward them, hissing, crackling, roaring, and lifting its flashing columns far higher than the loftiest deck, swaying from side to side in the air-currents, as if it would sweep the breadth of the river in its course. Guided by the invisible hand, it kept very nearly the centre of the stream as it neared the squadron, and by watchful effort each vessel was enabled to give it room as it passed, and, after a few almost breathless moments, loud cheers from the ships announced that the peril was over, and soon the dangerous visitor grounded below the fleet and burned harmlessly away.

Preparations were at once made to deal more securely with this method of attack. A whole fleet of small boats was supplied with grappling-irons, axes, and buckets, with which to meet the next floating conflagration. One of the steamers also prepared hose, to act as a fire-engine. About half-past eleven o'clock that same night a pillar of fire was seen coming down. So soon as it was in reach, the steamer dashed into it, scattering in every direction flames, sparks, and burning brands, and then turned upon it three streams from her hose, and then the fleet of boats shooting alongside grappled it and soon towed it ashore. These two experiments dissipated effectually the fear of the fire-rafts; and though the rebels, as if in desperation, continued to send them down, they only excited the jeers of the sailors.

The fire of the mortars was often so rapid that several shells would be in the air at once. On the third day, at evening, the *Itasca* and *Pinola* made an attempt to break the chain and blow up the hulks with a torpedo. The chain was broken, but the torpedo failed to explode. On the fourth day a large fire-raft was sent down, but it was towed ashore, and so rendered harmless. On that day a rebel supply-steamer was blown up at the forts. On the fifth day a singular accident occurred on board the flag-ship. Her cable was caught by a sunken floating wreck, which dragged her down-stream, and ran out her chain-cable with fearful velocity. Some seven hundred feet of the cable were run out before the capstan could be stopped, and in

doing this several men were severely injured. It was with great difficulty that the vessels could be kept apart in the rapid and shifting current, and several serious accidents occurred. Many cables and anchors were lost, and some spars, masts, and rigging were torn away by collisions. The Miami lost her mainmast, and four of her men were killed in this way.

On the fifth day the sixty rods in width of dense wood did not entirely protect the mortar-boats. The rebel gunners caught sight of the masts of one of the large steamers above the trees, and directed their shot by them for a time, and not without effect. The severity and rapidity of the fire may be estimated from the fact that in ninety minutes one hundred and twenty-five shot and shell fell among and around the vessels, not doing much damage, however, beyond cutting up rigging and spars.

So far as could be known from observation of the works, or any opinion could be formed from the well-sustained fire of the rebels, it did not appear that any serious damage had been done to the forts, and nearly all felt much discouragement at the prospect of reducing them or of inflicting any serious injury. Just at this time, however, a deserter presented himself from Fort Jackson, and represented that it was nearly demolished, and that the garrison was quite dispirited. This renewed the confidence of the officers and men, and they began the work with fresh energy and hope. After six days spent in this manner, it was decided that the squadron should attempt the passage of the forts. The condition of the works at the close of the bombardment is so differently stated, by even eye-witnesses, that it is very difficult to form an opinion. Some believe that no serious damage was done by the shells, or none which impaired the fighting power of the forts; others seem to think that Fort Jackson was nearly demolished.

Such being the case, perhaps the historian can do no better than present an official statement of one who visited Fort Jackson after the passage of the squadron. Immediately after the surrender of the forts Admiral Porter visited them, and gives the following official statement of what he saw :

. . . . My next step was to visit Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Never in my life did I witness such a scene of desolation and wreck as

the former presented—it was ploughed up by the 13-inch mortars, the bombs had set fire to and burnt out all the buildings in and around the fort; casemates were crushed and were crumbling in, and the only thing that saved them were the sand-bags that had been sent from New Orleans during the bombardment; and when they began to feel the effects of the mortars, when the communication was cut off between them and the city, this resource of sand-bags could avail them no longer. It was useless for them to hold out: a day's bombardment would have finished them; they had no means of repairing damages; the levee had been cut by the 13-inch bombs in over a hundred places; and the water had entered the casemates, making it very uncomfortable, if not impossible, to live there any longer. It was the only place the men had to fly to out of reach of the bombs. The drawbridge over the moat had been broken all to pieces, and all the causeways leading from the fort were cut and blown up with bomb-shells, so that it must have been impossible to walk there or carry on any operations with any degree of safety. The magazine seems to have been much endangered, explosions having taken place at the door itself, all the cotton-bags and protections having been blown away from before the magazine door. Eleven guns were dismounted during the bombardment, some of which were remounted again and used upon us. The walls were cracked and broken in many places, and we could scarcely step without treading into a hole made by a bomb-shell; the accuracy of the fire is, perhaps, the best ever seen in mortar practice; it seems to have entirely demoralized the men and astonished the officers. A water-battery, containing six very heavy guns, and which annoyed us at times very much, was filled with the marks of the bombs, no less than one hundred and seventy having fallen into it, smashing in the magazine, and driving the people out of it. On the night of the passage of the ships, this battery was completely silenced, so many bombs fell into it and burst over it. It had one gun in it, the largest I have ever seen, made at the Tredegar Works. I would not pretend to say how many bombs fell in the ditches around the works, but soldiers in the forts say about three thousand; many burst over the works, scattering the pieces of shell all around. The enemy admit but fourteen killed and thirty-nine wounded by the bombardment, which is likely the case, as we found but fourteen fresh graves, and the men mostly stayed in the casemates, which were three inches deep with water and very uncomfortable. Many remarkable escapes and incidents were related to us as having happened during the bombardment. Colonel Higgins stated an instance where a man was buried deep in the earth, by a bomb striking him between the shoulders, and

directly afterward another bomb exploded in the same place, and threw the corpse high in the air. All the boats and scows around the ditches and near the landing were sunk by bombs; and when we took possession, the only way they had to get in and out of the fort to the landing was by one small boat to ferry them across. All the lumber, shingles, and bricks used in building or repairs was scattered about in confusion and burnt up, and every amount of discomfort that man could bear seemed to have been showered upon those poor deluded wretches.

I was so much struck with the deserted appearance of what was once a most beautiful spot, that I ordered Mr. Gerdes and his assistants on the Coast Survey to make me an accurate plan of all the works, denoting every bomb that fell, and (as near as possible) the injury the fort had sustained, every distance being accurately measured by tape-line and compass, and the comparative size of fractures noted. The work has been executed with great zeal and accuracy, though it will only give a faint idea of the bombs that fell about the fort; many are lost sight of in the water, which has been let in by the cut levees; many burst over the fort; but enough have been marked to indicate the wonderful precision of fire and the endurance of the forts. Had the ground been hard instead of being soft mud, the first day's bombardment would have blown Fort Jackson into atoms; as it is, it is very much injured, and will require thorough repair before it can be made habitable.

Fort St. Philip received very little damage from our bombs, having fired at it with only one mortar, and that for the purpose of silencing a heavy rifled gun which annoyed us very much; we were fortunate enough to strike it in the middle and break it in two, and had not much more annoyance from that fort; two guns were capsized by a bomb at one time, but without injuring them; they were soon replaced; some trifling damage was done to the works, though nothing to affect the efficiency of the batteries; it was from Fort St. Philip that our ships suffered most, the men and officers there having had, comparatively, an easy time of it.

It was finally determined to attempt the passage of the forts on the morning of the 24th of April, a day hereafter to be memorable in the history of our country. The following is the now famous and characteristic general order of Admiral Farragut:

You will prepare your ship for service in the Mississippi River in the following manner:



Send down the top-gallant masts. Rig in the flying jib-boom, and land all the spars and rigging, except what are necessary for the three topsails, foresail, jib, and spanker. Trice up to the topmast stays or land the whiskers, and bring all the rigging into the bowsprit, so that there shall be nothing in the range of the direct fire ahead.

Make arrangements, if possible, to mount one or two guns on the poop and top-gallant forecastle; in other words, be prepared to use as many guns as possible ahead and astern, to protect yourself against the enemy's gunboats and batteries, bearing in mind that you will always have to ride head to the current, and can only avail yourself of the sheer of the helm to point a broadside gun more than three points forward of the beam.

Have a kedge in the mizzen chains (or any convenient place) on the quarter, with a hawser bent and leading through in the stern chock, ready for any emergency; also grapnels in the boats, ready to hook on to, and to tow off, fire-ships. Trim your vessel a few inches by the head, so that if she touches the bottom she will not swing head down the river. Put your boat howitzers in the fore-maintops, on the boat carriages, and secure them for firing abeam, etc. Should any injury occur to the machinery of the ship, making it necessary to drop down the river, you will back and fill down under sail, or you can drop your anchor and drift down, but in no case attempt to turn the ship's head down-stream. You will have a spare hawser ready, and when ordered to take in tow your next astern do so, keeping the hawser slack so long as the ship can maintain her own position, having a care not to foul the propeller.

No vessel must withdraw from battle, under any circumstances, without the consent of the flag-officer. You will see that force and other pumps and engine hose are in good order, and men stationed by them, and your men will be drilled to the extinguishing of fire.

Have light Jacob-ladders made to throw over the side for the use of the carpenters in stopping shot-holes, who are to be supplied with pieces of inch board lined with felt and ordinary nails, and see that the ports are marked in accordance with the "ordnance instructions" on the berth deck, to show the locality of the shot-hole.

Have many tubs of water about the decks, both for the purpose of extinguishing fire and for drinking. Have a heavy kedge in the port main-chains, and a whip on the main-yard, ready to run it up and let fall on the deck of any vessel you may run alongside of, in order to secure her for boarding.

You will be careful to have lanyards on the lever of the screw, so as

to secure the gun at the proper elevation, and prevent it from running down at *each fire*. I wish you to understand that the day is at hand when you will be called upon to meet the enemy in the worst form for our profession. You must be prepared to execute all those duties to which you have been so long trained in the Navy without having the opportunity of practising. I expect every vessel's crew to be well exercised at their guns, because it is required by the regulations of the service; and it is usually the first object of our attention; but they must be equally well trained for stopping *shot-holes* and extinguishing fire. Hot and cold shot will, no doubt, be freely dealt to us, and there must be stout hearts and quick hands to extinguish the one and stop the holes of the other.

I shall expect the most prompt attention to signals and verbal orders, either from myself or the captain of the fleet, who, it will be understood, in all cases acts by my authority.

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

The preparations for the great fight under this order embrace some interesting incidents. Some of these, however, date back of the order itself. From the description already given of the rebel defences, it will be readily seen that the forts could not be captured, or even passed, except by a most desperate fight. Indeed, judging from all men's past experience in war, it seemed, to most, nearly certain that the one hundred guns of the forts, the thirteen armed steamers, and the two iron-clad rams, would stop and destroy the fleet. The rebels felt very little apprehension in regard to the result; for, although the firing from the mortars had been steady, rapid, and accurate, and though nearly every thing which such enormous shells could destroy was more or less injured, and the garrison subjected to all forms of discomfort, yet few of the casemates were seriously shattered, and most of the guns could still be used, as was fully shown during the battle. The most anxious thought was therefore given by all the officers to such preparations for the fierce struggle as might best secure the vessels and the men. No possible device seems to have been left untried; and, considering the means at command, perhaps the ingenuity of man in such a case was never shown in a more interesting manner. Each commander, with his officers, vied in honorable emulation with all the rest in the effort to make his ship secure.

Here, the engineer of the Richmond, Mr. Moore, suggested that novel form of *iron-cladding*, made by seizing the iron sheet-cables, up and down on the sides of the vessel opposite the engines. "It at once commended itself to the judgment of all, and was adopted," says Admiral Farragut, "by all the vessels except the Mississippi, when a framework was built in the coal-bunkers, in which the heavy chain of the Colorado was placed, the coal in the squadron not being sufficient to fill the bunkers." This plan of defence caused afterward much discussion and great indignation among the rebels and their friends in Europe, when used by the Kearsarge to protect her machinery in her fight with the Alabama. The pirate Semmes undertook to cover the mortification of his defeat and running away, by asserting that the Kearsarge was a disguised iron-clad; a statement which his English admirers, as deeply mortified as he was, were very anxious to believe, and endeavored to show that the gallant Winslow had fought dishonorably with concealed weapons.

It was a difficult work, requiring time and patience, to apply this *extempore* iron armor to the sides of the steamers. It was put on with two layers, one over the other, and, of course, it was necessary to spike it on so firmly that the stroke of a shot would not tear it off and bring it all down into the water together. After this was done, the machinery was still exposed to shot and shell that might come in forward or abaft, and each commander guarded against this as best he could with the means at his disposal. They used the hammocks, piled coal in vacant places, stowed in bags of ashes and of sand, and even bags of clothes; in fact, they did every thing that human ingenuity could devise. Some placed hammocks along the bulwarks, and some made strong nettings of ropes, which were strung along the bulwarks and overhead to catch the flying splinters, and this last was the means of saving many lives, as, in general, as many are injured by splinters as are struck with shot. Commander James Alden thus speaks of this in his report: "Much injury to the men, I am sure, was saved by a carefully prepared 'splinter-netting.' At one point between the guns the netting was forced out to its utmost tension, and large pieces of plank were thus prevented from sweeping the

deck, and perhaps destroying the men at the guns. I would therefore recommend, that in our future operations these simple life-preservers be adopted in the other ships of the fleet." Still another device is thus described by Commander Alden, and is mentioned also in Admiral Farragut's detailed account: "I must beg leave to call your attention to another simple and very effective expedient for obtaining *light*. The deck and gun-carriages were whitewashed fore and aft, and it was truly wonderful to note the difference. Where before all was darkness, now side-tackle, falls, handspikes, ammunition, and indeed every thing about the decks, was plainly visible by the contrast." In some cases the commanders rubbed the river-mud over their vessels, that their hulls might be less distinctly seen.

When all was ready, the admiral, with the prudent care which is characteristic of the man, visited, in the afternoon previous to the battle, every ship in the squadron, that he might learn from each commander whether his orders were perfectly understood. He says in his letter: "Every one appeared to understand his orders well, and all looked forward to the conflict with firmness but with anxiety, as it was to be in the night. I had previously sent Captain Bell, with the petard-man, with Lieutenant-Commanding Crosby, in the Pinola, and Lieutenant-Commanding Caldwell, in the Itasca, to break the chain which crossed the river. This duty was not thoroughly performed, in consequence of the failure to ignite the petards. Still it was a success, and, under the circumstances, a highly meritorious one." The chain was cast off from one of the hulks which swung in-shore, and thus an opening was made. The work was done under a severe fire, and with great danger of losing the vessel, the forts were so near. The manner in which this was performed is thus described by Lieutenant Caldwell:

UNITED STATES STEAM GUNBOAT ITASCA, }  
PILOT TOWN, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, April 24, 1862. }

SIR: Agreeably to your instructions, I proceeded up the river, in the boat furnished from the Hartford, to make a final reconnoissance of the schooners on the west bank of the river, and a careful examination as to the chains that were originally stretched from them to the schooners on the starboard side, one of which we ran on shore on the night of the 20th. I succeeded in reaching them after a long, fatiguing pull

against the current, without opposition or discovery, although we were directly in range between the forts and a fire lighted on the opposite shore to illuminate the reach across the river, and I could distinctly hear the voices of the rebels at Fort Jackson, as they were busily engaged in some outside work. I found two of the three schooners on shore, and the outside one riding head to the current, with a number of chains hanging from her bow. I passed ahead, leaving her fifty yards on the port hand, and dropped over a deep-sea lead, veering to twelve fathoms of line. We then lay on our oars and drifted down the stream, without feeling any obstructions. We found all the booms attached to the in-shore schooners, and a number of rafts in-shore of them, aground; the outside schooner was entirely clear. Returning, I stopped alongside of the outside schooner on the east bank, and dropped the lead over, with fifteen fathoms of line, floating by within twenty yards of her.

Having satisfied myself fully, by these and other observations, that no obstructions whatever existed, and that the chains we slipped on the night of the 20th had disarranged and almost destroyed the whole apparatus for preventing our passage up the river, and that the condition of things was precisely as I had previously reported, and that the whole fleet could safely pass, I made with confidence and inexpressible satisfaction, on my return, our preconceived signal that the channel was clear and every thing propitious for the advance of the fleet.

The following general order was issued April 20th, which explains the admiral's views, and gives the plan of attack:

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, *April 20, 1862.*

The flag-officer having heard all the opinions expressed by the different commanders, is of the opinion that whatever is to be done will have to be done quickly, or we will be again reduced to a blockading squadron, without the means of carrying on the bombardment, as we have nearly expended all the shells and fuses and material for making cartridges. He has always entertained the same opinions which are expressed by Commander Porter, that is, there are three modes of attack, and the question is, which is the one to be adopted? His own opinion is, that a combination of two should be made, viz.: the forts should be run, and when a force is once above the forts to protect the troops, they should be landed at quarantine from the Gulf side by bringing them through the bayou, and then our forces should move up the river, mutually aiding each other as it can be done to advantage.

When, in the opinion of the flag-officer, the propitious time has ar-

rived, the signal will be made to weigh and advance to the conflict. If, in his opinion, at the time of arriving at the respective positions of the different divisions of the fleet, we have the advantage, he will make the signal for close action, No. 8, and abide the result—conquer or to be conquered, drop anchor or keep under way, as in his opinion is best.

Unless the signal above mentioned is made, it will be understood that the first order of sailing will be formed after leaving Fort St. Philip, and we will proceed up the river in accordance with the original opinion expressed.

The programme of the order of sailing accompanies this general order, and the commanders will hold themselves in readiness for the service as indicated.

## ORDER OF FLEET.

*2d Division Gunboats, Captain Bell commanding.*

□ Winona,  
Lt.-Com'g Nichols.  
□ Itasca,  
Lt.-Com'g Caldwell.  
□ Phenix,  
Lt.-Com'g Crosby.  
□ Kanabec,  
Lt.-Com'g Russell.  
□ Iroquois,  
Commander DeCamp.  
□ Schoer,  
Lt.-Com'g Donaldson.

*1st Division of Ships.*

□ Richmond,  
Commander Alden.  
□ Brooklyn,  
Captain Caven.  
□ Hartford,  
Com'dr Wainwright.

*1st Division Gunboats, Captain Bailey commanding.*

□ Washington,  
Lt.-Com'g A. Smith.  
□ Kinco,  
Lt.-Com'g Ransom.  
□ Ketchikan,  
Lt.-Com'g Preble.  
□ Varuna,  
Commander Boggs.  
□ Onida,  
Commander Lee.  
□ Cayuga,  
Lt.-Com'g Harrison.

*2d Division of Ships.*

□ Mississippi,  
Commander M. Smith.  
□ Pensacola,  
Captain Morris.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

When the general plan of the attack was decided upon, it was deemed prudent first to ascertain from personal inspection whether the obstructions removed by Lieutenant Caldwell had been replaced by the enemy. On the night of the 23d of April

this officer was again sent up to the barrier. The moment he was discovered, the rebels began to send down fire-rafts and to light fires along the shores, and then the forts opened fire upon Caldwell's vessel. He found the passage still clear, and reported to the admiral. The signal to get under way was made known to the officers by two ordinary red lights, which would not attract the attention of the enemy.

At five minutes before 2 o'clock A. M., on the 24th of April, these lights were hung out, and the preparation for the dreadful work began. No commanding officer's eye had been closed in sleep that night, for all knew the perilous nature of the work, and that the issue of the bloody day would depend very much, under God, upon the manner in which each could manage and fight his vessel in the night, in the swift currents of an unknown river, and in constant danger from each other as well as from their common foe.

The plan of the battle was simple but judicious. The fleet was to proceed in two divisions, one of which was to direct its main attack upon Fort Jackson, and the other upon Fort St. Philip. At the same time the five steamers which belonged to the mortar-fleet were to move up within close range, and throw grape and canister into the water-batteries of Fort Jackson, to silence, if possible, their guns while the fleet was passing. The mortars, for which accurate range had been obtained during the afternoon, were to fire as rapidly as possible while the ships were in range of the forts.

It was a still, dark night, and a slight haze partly obscured the river. The moment the signal appeared, for which all eyes were watching, the usual bustle of getting under way was heard throughout the fleet; yet every sound was a subdued one, and they rose, when mingled, only like a muffled murmur, instead of the common clear tramp of feet, and ring of outspoken voices. All were anxious to conceal the first movements from the rebels; and therefore the chain-cables seemed to grate along the hawse-holes more harshly than usual, and the click of the capstan pawls appeared louder as the men with careful step went slowly round. It is always somewhat difficult to weigh anchor and get safely under way in the swift current of the Mississippi, where the vessel is liable to be drifted ashore or out of her

course before she gets steerage way, and one can readily understand what care and skill were required to get all the vessels securely in motion amid the darkness of the night, and when silence was for a time so important. They were anchored without much regard to order, and the danger of fouling each other was exceedingly great; for even in the daytime many serious accidents had occurred from this cause. It reflects great credit upon the seamanship of our officers and the efficiency of the men, that the work was done so quietly and so well. Such, however, was the trouble in raising and securing the anchors of the Pensacola, that it was half-past 3 o'clock A. M. before all were under way.

The five steamers attached to the mortar-fleet, one the Harriet Lane, bearing the division flag of Commander Porter, ranged close in-shore, ready to move up, and the mortars that had sent one bomb per minute during the day were ready for a more rapid fire. The Cayuga, Lieutenant-Commander Harrison, bearing the division flag of Captain Bailey, then moved on, leading the first division of the gunboats. All then went rapidly forward. The Cayuga had just passed the barrier when she was discovered. Forts St. Philip and Jackson opened their batteries. The shores were lighted up with fires; fire-rafts were kindled; the leading vessels of the fleet replied to the forts; the mortar-schooners sent at once a shower of bombs, darting above the ships their arches of fire, and plunging into the rebel works; the mortar-steamers sent into the water-batteries their storm of grape and canister, sweeping the men from the guns, and thus the most fearful naval battle of the age began.

To describe such a scene, so as to give any adequate conception of its grandeur or its horrors, is simply impossible. No mortal eye saw it as a whole, wrapped as it was in the pitchy, suffocating cloud of battle. No one beheld more than was caught by momentary glimpses of the scene by the flash of the guns. Little could be heard but the roar of distant batteries, the crash of the nearer broadside, the dull, shuddering explosion of bombs, the stroke of shot, and the crashing of shattered planks and timbers. The attention of each officer was necessarily absorbed in caring for his own ship, and he could take little note of what was passing around him, beyond what



was necessary in the performance of his own special duties. Besides, in such an awful scene, principal events only make permanent impressions on the memory. In such a case, the historian can only avail himself of the separate statements of the witnesses, and *compose* a pen-picture as best he can, with the painful consciousness that it must be imperfect as a whole, and even erroneous in some of its details. The best that a candid man can hope to do is to present a description which shall not contradict essential truth.

In a few minutes after the ships had passed the barrier the fire became general, and, as the morning was calm, the smoke settled down so densely over the river and the shores, that nothing could be seen except in the fitful glow of the artillery, and both on board the ships and in the forts they aimed only by the flash of each other's guns; and when the rebel gunboats became engaged, it was very difficult for either party to distinguish friend from foe. If, on the one hand, it is astonishing that the fleet could escape destruction from the one hundred guns of the forts and the rebel gunboats and rams, on the other it seems a marvellous thing that the rebel gunners, under the terrible tempest of fire aimed where they stood, could have inflicted such serious damage upon vessels rushing past in the darkness. Every instant one of the huge bombs came down with a roar upon some part of the works; there was no pause in the death-hail of grape and canister that poured into the water-batteries from Porter's mortar-fleet; and the broadsides of the ships and gunboats swept the parapets and embrasures of the forts as they were passing. When, and how, the rebel artillerists fired so as to strike the fleet one hundred and sixty-three times, is certainly a wonder. Perhaps the clearest idea will be formed of this fight by observing first the progress of some of the principal ships.

The Cayuga, a gunboat of about five hundred tons, led the advance. She was commanded by Harrison, and was armed with one 11-inch Dahlgren gun, one 20-pounder rifle, one smaller rifle, and two 24-pounder howitzers. As already stated, she was opened upon by both forts soon after passing the barrier. As she started at the signal, she was quite in advance of the other ships. The guns of the forts and their water-bat-

teries thus had an opportunity of playing upon this small vessel before the smoke was so dense as completely to veil her. It is no wonder that she was struck, as her commander states, "from stem to stern." It is astonishing that she was not sunk outright between the forts. She pressed bravely on, though struck almost every moment, and not able to bring a gun to bear in reply, and yet with no fatal injury, and with her machinery unharmed. Steaming right on through the heavy cross-fire, she was at length close up with St. Philip, and with a will the men opened with grape and canister, pressing still on, and in a few minutes she had passed beyond the line of fire from the forts, only to meet a more formidable foe—the fleet of rebel gunboats. She had passed so far ahead that not a supporting ship was in sight. The forts were between her and her friends, and thirteen gunboats before and around her—an unpleasant prospect. Three of these gunboats at once dashed at her, with the intention to run her down and board her. One steered for the starboard bow, one came on astern, and one rushed at her starboard side amidships. On this last one the 11-inch Dahlgren was trained, and held on her as she came. The gunner, with lanyard in hand, waited till she was within thirty yards, and fired. Instantly she sheered off, ran in-shore, and in a few minutes more was wrapped in flames. Before the one on the bow could touch the Cayuga, she was met and driven back by the Parrott rifle on the forecastle, while the crew was formed to repel boarders from the third steamer, then close on the stern. As Captain Bailey stated in his report, "this was *hot work*."

At this critical moment, however, assistance came. Captain Boggs, on the Varuna, and Captain Lee, on the Oneida, came dashing up, and the Cayuga was relieved. The work of the Oneida, and the loss of the Varuna, will be described elsewhere. The Cayuga, delivered from this gallant but unequal fight, struck by forty-two shot, shattered in hull and rigging, but with her machinery still uninjured, passed bravely on up the river to engage next morning in another serious battle. Her masts were already so shattered as to be unfit for further service, the carriage of the 11-inch Dahlgren was struck, and the smoke-stack was riddled, but she could fight still.

Leaving for a time the Cayuga, we will follow the Varuna

and Oneida. The Varuna was a converted merchant-steamer, and by no means as stanch and strong as the vessels built for the Navy, and could not, therefore, resist as well, either shot or the stroke of a ram. She was pressed forward steadily up to the forts without receiving serious injury, and although she was hit several times, not a man had been wounded up to the time of passing the forts. When abreast of the rebel works, she, like the rest, fired grape and canister as she passed. She had no sooner cleared the line of fire from the forts, than she found herself in the midst of the rebel gunboats. The order was then given to work the batteries on both sides of the ship, and to load with grape. The guns were given the extreme lateral train forward, and fired as the enemy's gunboats came in range on either side, while at the same time the forward and after pivot-guns were also rapidly fired. Very soon, however, they found they were getting beyond the range of grape, and then loaded with 5-second shells. Among the first of these shells fired, one struck a rebel gunboat, and bursting, carried away the port wheelhouse and exploded her boiler, leaving her a wreck. Soon after, three more were set on fire by the shells, and they were run ashore and the work of destruction was going swiftly on when a rebel steamer with an iron bow headed for the Varuna.

This steamer was carrying at the time but a small amount of steam, and the rebel ram soon came up with her and struck her twice heavily, once abreast the mainmast, and again opposite the smoke-stack. At the second blow, the Varuna was ready, and gave him the whole starboard broadside, sweeping his deck, as was afterward known, of nearly every thing alive. Before striking, the rebel fired his forward gun, a rifled 32-pounder, raking the Varuna's deck, killing three men and wounding several more. The blow which he gave was also a severe one. They had hardly recovered from this shock when the shattered Varuna was again struck by the Stonewall Jackson on the port-quarter, and this blow was so damaging that it was seen the vessel could not be kept afloat. Still the Varuna, sinking though she was, kept up her fire on these two enemies so long as her guns were above water. She was run ashore and allowed to sink as a last resort, and the crew and the wounded were all rescued by the assistance of other vessels

then near. The two adversaries of the *Varuna* which gave her the fatal wounds were themselves driven on shore and burned, after fearful slaughter had been made with their crews. The gallant Boggs fought his ship until she was nearly buried beneath the waves, and he had the satisfaction of knowing that the loss of his vessel was amply avenged.

In fifteen minutes after this gunboat was struck she was on the bottom, with only her top-gallant fore-castle out of the water. There was at first some disposition to misrepresent the loss of the *Varuna*, and to censure Commander Boggs, but so soon as the facts were known he was not only acquitted of all blame, but was commended for his courage and daring. He dealt destruction in no stinted measure to the rebels, and fought as long as his ship would float.

In this part of the battle the *Oneida* also bore an important part. The *Cayuga*, *Oneida*, and *Varuna* being the first, second, and third ships in the first division of gunboats, the *Oneida* was instructed to pass up on the Fort St. Philip side, and not to fire her port battery, lest she might endanger our own vessels. Her port battery was therefore shifted to the starboard side, and on that side also the pivot-gun was trained. The moment the point, a mile and a half below Fort Jackson, was passed, both forts began to fire with their long-range guns. The proposed order of battle could not well be preserved in the darkness and the confusion of the fight. Just above the barrier the *Oneida* came up with the *Mississippi*, which, for a few moments, was almost at a stand, on the Fort St. Philip side, firing her port battery at Fort Jackson; but the current caught her on the starboard bow and she shot over toward Fort St. Philip. The *Varuna*, whose station was astern, came up at this moment on the port side, and thus the line was broken. The *Oneida* struck, at the same time, a strong eddy, in which she passed swiftly close under the guns of Fort St. Philip, so near that the sparks from the battery almost came upon her deck. Here, at this close range, she fired, as rapidly as possible, balls from her two rifles, grape and canister from the forward 32-pounders, and shrapnel from the two 11-inch pivot-guns, passing the whole line of the works. Her nearness to the batteries saved her from destruction. The rebels mistook her distance in the

darkness; their guns were pointed too high, and their shot passed over.

Like the Cayuga and Varuna, the Oneida encountered the gunboats of the enemy upon passing beyond the line of fire from the forts. These gunboats, before the battle, had been tied to the bank above Fort St. Philip, and darkness and smoke hid all objects, except as they might be seen an instant by the flash of the guns. By one of these flashes, a dark, low, strange-looking object was seen gliding swiftly down on the port side, too low, and too near to be reached by her guns. In a moment it vanished silently in the darkness down the river. This was the ram Manassas, dashing down among our ships, aiming, as it afterward appeared, at our largest vessels. In a moment more a rebel steamer came on, running across the Oneida's bow, not having discovered her in the darkness. With a full head of steam, the Oneida struck her, and cut her, with a loud crash, down to the water. The sudden meeting was over in a moment. The shattered rebel drifted away sinking, and the Oneida passed on, firing now right and left into the enemy's boats. In the gray of the morning the Oneida was close to the Cayuga, whose passage above the forts has already been described. Here it was found that the Varuna was somewhere ahead, and that the rebels were trying to board her. Steaming rapidly, the Varuna was soon discovered ashore. As already mentioned, the two steamers that had attacked her were crippled, and endeavored to escape, but were driven ashore and destroyed. As before stated, the Varuna, after her gallant fight, went down herself, but she first made sad havoc with her enemies.

The passage of the Mississippi, one of the largest steamers in the squadron, was also attended by more than the usual excitement and peril of battle. She was commanded by Melancton Smith, afterward promoted to the rank of commodore for his gallant service on this and other occasions. She was the second ship in the second division, following the Pensacola. Soon after passing the barrier, the Mississippi was brought into the very centre of the fearful fight. The order of the advance was already broken up in the darkness and by the currents, and the frequent necessity of sheering or backing to prevent run-

ning into each other, or to avoid the fire-rafts. Steamers were endeavoring to follow their leaders, or to determine their position by the gleam of the guns, and pointing their own by the flashes from the forts. Some of the gunboats had gone ahead of even the flag-ship, and were pressing on as best they could. The forts had the fleet at short range, and the rebel gunners were working bravely, considering the terrific tempest that was pouring upon them—bombs from the mortars, and shot and shell, grape, canister, and shrapnel from the broadsides of the fleet and from the howitzers in the tops.

Shot after shot went crashing through and through the *Mississippi's* sides, making her appear like a ruin, but inflicting no vital injury, and yet disabling the machinery somewhat by damaging one of the bearings of a shaft. The mizzenmast was also shattered by a shot which went through twelve feet above the deck. Eight shot went entirely through the ship. The smoke became so thick that the flash of guns only made a momentary glare, without revealing even near objects, and burning gunboats floating down made only a lurid spot in the dense black cloud that shook without parting, at the roar of broadsides. As the noble old ship was staggering with her injured machinery, she felt a shock, such as neither shot nor shell could give, that started the crew from their feet, and sent a grinding shudder through all her timbers. The ram *Manassas* had struck her on the port-quarter, gouging out her planking below the water-line with an ugly gash seven feet long and four inches deep, and shaving off fifty copper bolts. Had the cut been only a trifle deeper, the *Mississippi*, in a few minutes, would have been at the bottom of the river. The ram passed on down the river, striking the *Brooklyn* and one other vessel as she went, and the *Mississippi* continued on her course. Soon after passing the line of the fire of the forts, she encountered a rebel steamer. The forward guns were fired into her as she came within range, and then the after-division as she was passing by, and though Captain Smith did not assert in his report that he sunk her, the fact was that she was seen no more.

It was daylight when the *Mississippi* had passed beyond the forts and through the gunboats, and then the *Manassas* was seen coming up the river, nearly in the middle of the

stream. The flag-ship was near, and Captain Smith hailed her and asked permission to attack the ram. It was given, and the Mississippi started down the stream with all the speed her damaged machinery would bear, intending to run her adversary down. The ram, fearing to meet the blow, sheered in-shore. Captain Smith, then seeing that he could capture her without a collision, passed her and rounded to below her, while she grounded on the bank, and the crew, escaping through her port, disappeared in the bushes, while a white flag was flying, and therefore they were not fired upon. The commander of the Mississippi then sent out his boats with an engineer to take possession. They found her engine still in motion, and were about to attach a hawser to tow her away. Just at that moment a burning steamboat came drifting down, and fearing that he should be struck, as he would have been had he remained, Captain Smith recalled his boats, and ordered the Manassas to be set on fire, and then, to make her destruction sure, he riddled her with shot as she lay. The burning steamer struck the ram as she passed, swung her round, and pushed her off into deep water, and they both, in flames, drifted away. The Manassas soon after blew up and sank.

From the damage inflicted upon the Mississippi by this single stroke of the Manassas, it was shown that this novel craft was a very formidable antagonist for a wooden ship, though so quickly demolished by Captain Smith, and the service done by him in destroying her was greater than was at first supposed. The heavy war-steamer made a very narrow escape when struck but once by the armored prow of the ram. The Brooklyn also, one of our largest sloops, was in no small danger, and was saved by her chain-armor. In the darkness the Brooklyn came so close to the Manassas before she was discovered, that the ram was unable to get up speed before striking. As it was, however, with only half a blow, the iron bow crushed in three planks in the Brooklyn's side, just abaft the mainmast, driving the links of the chain deep into her side. The first reports of the officers of the ship represented the damage as slight, but afterward, when the carpenters made a survey of the ship, they reported it as a serious injury. It was well for the fleet that the career of the Manassas was thus ended by the Mississippi.

The Brooklyn bore an important part in the fight, and suffered very severely. Her place in the line was right astern of the Hartford, but she soon lost sight of the flag-ship in the darkness and blinding smoke, and could only follow what was supposed to be the line of the Hartford's fire. Captain Craven suddenly found his vessel running over one of the hulks and rafts that bore up the chain which had been stretched across the river. Entangled with these, the ship fell off from her course, swung athwart the river, and her bow struck the shore. While in this position, she received a fire from Fort St. Philip which cut her up severely. Scarcely had the Brooklyn's head been turned up-stream once more, when she was struck as just related, by the Manassas, "feebly," as Captain Craven then thought—"seriously," as the examining carpenters afterward reported. There seems to have been but one opening in the iron side of the ram, a port-hole closed by an iron shutter. Here her one gun was mounted. As she approached the Brooklyn this was open, and when at the distance of only ten feet, she fired directly toward the smoke-stack of the Brooklyn, aiming evidently at the steam-drum. The shot entered five feet above the water-line, and lodged in the sand-bags which had been piled around the steam-drum. It was a narrow escape. A few moments after this, and while the ship was under a raking fire from Fort Jackson, and suffering severely, a large rebel steamer, a three-masted propeller, came on, parting the smoke and the darkness, close at hand, and opened her fire. The guns of the port broadside were trained on her, and the ship was held steady until the rebel was within fifty yards. At that distance, the whole broadside, eleven 5-second 9-inch shells, was hurled into her almost simultaneously. There was a crash which sounded like an echo from the guns, shells exploded in her sides and on her decks; flames burst out a moment after, and the flaming, shattered wreck drifted helplessly away. Groping his way in the dark, sometimes through and then under the heavy cloud of smoke, the gallant Craven pushed on till he found himself right abreast of St. Philip, and so close on shore that the leadsman on the starboard chains cried out, "Only thirteen feet, sir!" What was done by the Brooklyn while in that position is thus stated by her com-



mander : " As we could bring all our guns to bear for a few brief moments, we poured in grape and canister, and I had the satisfaction of completely silencing that work before I left it—my men in the tops witnessing, in the flashes of their bursting shrapnels, the enemy running like sheep for more comfortable quarters. After passing the forts, we engaged several of the enemy's gunboats; and being at short range, generally from sixty to a hundred yards, the effects of the broadsides must have been terrific. The ship was under fire about an hour and a half. We lost eight men killed, and had twenty-six wounded, and our damages from the enemy's shot and shell are severe."

But the central figure in the great battle was, of course, the flag-ship, the now historic Hartford, a vessel which holds a place with Old Ironsides in the affections of the American people. Farragut has made his favorite ship as renowned as himself, and the Hartford will go down in history linked inseparably with his name. At half-past 3 o'clock, having been delayed by the difficulty which some of the vessels found in weighing anchor, the admiral, with three ensigns flying, led the way gallantly into that valley of fire and death. In ten minutes both forts opened their fire. The Hartford dashed on with her full speed for fifteen minutes without returning a shot, and then opened with her forward gun. Already the river was ploughed in furrows and dashed into jets and foam by the rush of shot and the bursting of shells; portions of the rigging dangling loose and splintered spars marked the passage of balls, and blood and wounds and death began to appear upon her decks. At 4 o'clock she opened her broadsides, and by this time the firing had become general from the fleet and the forts, from the steamers of the mortar-fleet, and from the mortar-schooners below. Thick darkness settled over all; a cloud, denser and blacker than ever darkened the heavens in a thunder-storm, hid the forts, the shores, and even the river from sight, and the ships from each other, except as they were revealed for a moment by the blinding flashes of the guns. The fire-rafts that came drifting down did not light up the river, except in the earlier part of the battle; they merely showed, by a dull glare, how thick the darkness was. The ram *Manassas*, low, black, almost in-





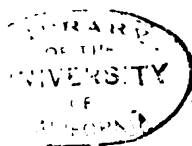


FROM NEW YORK

THE HARTFORD, 1862

# THE HARTFORD

*Second Rate.*



visible in the gloom, was gliding about like some huge water-monster, or demon rather, breathing fire, as he pushed before him the burning rafts. The powerful iron-clad *Louisiana*, lying above the forts, joined also in the fight with her heavy rifled guns. At a quarter past 4 o'clock, when the *Hartford* was a little above Fort Jackson, though not out of range of its guns, a fire-raft was discovered coming swiftly upon her port-quarter. As the vessel was sheered to avoid the raft, she grounded on a shoal, and then it was seen that the ram was behind the raft, pushing it on; and on it came, and swung its long high sheet of flame right against the *Hartford's* side, a moving wave of fire, stretching almost from stem to stern, rolling in at the port-holes, driving the men from the guns, surging up and over the bulwarks, and darting up her rigging. At the same time she was on fire from the enemy's shells in the cabin, and both forts were hurling into her shot and shell as she lay apparently helpless for a few moments, and those who comprehended the situation felt that the *Hartford* was lost. Farragut and his brave associates did not for a moment lose their presence of mind in this terrible scene. Orders were given to reverse the engines, the men at the starboard batteries were kept at the guns as if nothing had happened, part of the crew were called to fire-quarters, the ship slowly backed off, was swung clear of the burning mass, the flames were extinguished, and the glorious old *Hartford*, almost supernaturally delivered, marked her upward progress by the receding thunder of her guns. One other attempt was made upon her, which was still more briefly ended. A rebel steamer, apparently full of men, rushed at her as if to board, when a single shell from a gun under the charge of the marines, Captain Broome, blew her up, and she instantly disappeared. The ships soon after reached their anchorage-ground above the forts, and, the gunboats of the rebels having been mostly destroyed and the rest dispersed, the morning's battle was closed.

Having selected for special description some of the vessels whose passage of the forts was marked by unusual incidents, it is only just to other commanders who performed their duty with equal bravery, and whose vessels bore their due proportion of the heat and burden of the fight, that they should

be permitted to give, each for himself, some account of the scenes on his own ship. The following is an extract from the report of Captain H. W. Morris, commanding the *Pensacola* :

UNITED STATES SLOOP-OF-WAR *PENSACOLA*,  
AT ANCHOR OFF NEW ORLEANS, *April 28, 1862.* }

SIR : I have the honor to report the following incidents and occurrences of the conflict of the 24th and 25th of April in passing Forts Jackson and St. Philip and their adjacent batteries ; also, the engagement with the rebel gunboats and the "ram," which were stationed above those forts ; also, the action with the batteries located a few miles below this city, and which latter took place on the 25th instant.

Your order to me was that this ship should, after passing the barricade below the forts, proceed to the attack of Fort St. Philip, in order to divert its fire from your division, so that you should not be exposed to the fire of both of these forts at the same time. On our arrival at the opening of the barricade, the enemy opened his fire on us. We proceeded slowly through it, firing only our bow guns, until we reached a position where our broadside guns could be used ; we then continued slowly on, frequently stopping and returning his fire, and sustaining that of the rebel gunboats at the same time, until we had reached a point above that fort where its fire could no longer reach us. The ram, after having struck the *Varuna* gunboat, and forced her to run on shore to prevent sinking, advanced to attack this ship, coming down on us right ahead. She was perceived by Lieutenant F. A. Roe just in time to avoid her by sheering the ship, and she passed close on our starboard side, receiving, as she went by, a broadside from us. The gunboats of the enemy now fled up the river, and some of them were run on shore and set fire to by their own crews. We were under the fire of the enemy about two hours. We then steamed up the river to render assistance to the *Varuna*. We sent our boats to her to assist in taking off her officers and crew, and have seven of the former and about sixty of the latter now on board.

The conduct of the officers and crew of this ship was, in every respect, praiseworthy, evincing coolness and courage of the highest order. The fire of the guns was kept up with all the rapidity which the circumstances of the action demanded, to insure injury to the enemy without the wasting of ammunition. The amount of damage inflicted by us on him cannot be ascertained, but I believe that it must have been very considerable. It is impossible in a night attack to do justice to each officer's merits by specifying his particular conduct in the battle ;

but the result of the conflict is the best evidence of the great good behavior of them all. . . . .

I am, very respectfully,

HENRY W. MORRIS, *Captain.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*  
*commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

The share which the sloop-of-war Portsmouth took in the battle is thus stated by Commander S. Swartwout :

UNITED STATES SLOOP-OF-WAR PORTSMOUTH, }  
OFF PILOT TOWN, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, April 28, 1862. }

SIR : In compliance with your orders, I got under way at 3.30 A. M. on the 24th instant, and proceeded toward Fort Jackson, in tow of the steamer Jackson, for the purpose of enfilading that fort, to draw their fire from your squadron whilst passing by. Upon arriving at the position designated by you in your directions to Lieutenant Johnson, I ordered the ship to be anchored, and had a spring run out, to breast her broadside to. I had scarcely accomplished this when a very brisk and galling fire, with shell and solid shot, was opened upon the ship from a masked water-battery only a few hundred yards distant, and so completely concealed from our view that we could only judge of its location by the flashes from the rebel guns. We returned their fire with as much precision as we could under the circumstances, but with what effect I have been unable to ascertain. After firing one round from my port battery and four rounds from my Parrott gun, the spring was shot away, and the ship swung around, so that I was unable to bring any of my guns to bear upon Fort Jackson or the water-battery. By this time the rebels had got their range, and were dropping their shell and shot with great rapidity all around and close to the ship, many of them cutting away the rigging just above our heads. A 68-pounder solid shot was thrown on board, falling upon the spar-deck, just under the top-gallant forecastle, tearing away the plank about ten feet, splitting one of the beams, and in its passage striking John Hancock, seaman, in the left leg, shattering it so much as to render amputation necessary. He has since died of his wound. Finding that the ship was a target for the enemy's batteries, without being able to bring my guns to bear, and, as the squadron had passed the forts, the object of my visit was accomplished, I reluctantly gave the order to ship the cable, and was soon drifted out of range of the rebel guns by the wind and tide. I cannot speak in too high praise of the bravery, coolness, and subordination of the officers and crew upon this trying occasion.



Commander Porter called to see me on the afternoon of the 24th instant, and, upon consultation, we decided that the most judicious course would be for all the vessels, with the exception of a few of his most powerful steamers, to drop down to this anchorage, under my protection, so that, in case any of the rams and fire-rafts should escape his steamers, this ship could arrest their progress here.

Having received the glorious tidings to-day that Forts Jackson and St. Philip have surrendered to Commander Porter, I have concluded to proceed up the river again, in order to recover, if possible, the cable and anchor which I slipped on the 24th instant, and also to render all the assistance in my power. I have just received intelligence from Ship Island that Lieutenant-Commanding Abner Read, of the steamer New London, is in a critical situation, as there are five rebel steamers preparing to attack him. I will therefore order one of our gunboats to proceed with all dispatch to his assistance.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. SWARTWOUT, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*commanding U. S. Naval Forces Western Gulf of Mexico.*

Commander John De Camp describes in this manner the passage of the Iroquois :

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, OFF NEW ORLEANS, *May 3, 1862.*

SIR : I beg to submit the following report respecting our engagement with Forts Jackson and St. Philip, and a fleet of rebel steamers and rams in this river, April 24th and 25th.

The Iroquois, being on picket duty during the night of the 24th, and being about one mile in advance of the squadron, we observed the signal for action made on board the flag-ship about 3 A. M. Soon after, the ship of the first division having passed ahead, we fell into our place, astern of the Scioto, and stood toward the forts. At 4 A. M. we were hotly engaged with the forts, and shortly after a ram and the rebel gunboat McCrea came upon our quarter and astern of us, and poured into the Iroquois a most destructive fire of grapeshot and langrage, part of which was copper slugs ; a great many of them were found on our decks after the action. We succeeded in getting one 11-inch shell into the McCrea, and one stand of canister, which drove her from us. We suffered severely from the raking cross-fire of Fort St. Philip, but Fort Jackson inflicted no injury, although we passed within fifty yards of its guns. Passing the forts, we were beset by five or six rebel steamers. We

gave each a broadside of shell as we passed, and the most of them were entirely destroyed. Four miles above the forts we captured the enemy's gunboat No. 3, armed with one 24-pound brass howitzer, and well supplied with small-arms, fixed ammunition, sails, etc. At this point we also captured about forty soldiers, including Lieutenant Henderson, of the rebel army. These men were paroled and landed at New Orleans. Some of them were so badly wounded that I sent them to the hospital without parole; they will not trouble us again very soon, I think. Anchoring, by order, at 9 P. M., we were again under way at daylight on the 25th, and, in company with the squadron, stood up the river. At Chalmette we encountered two rebel batteries, but their attempt to annoy us scarcely deserves the name of a battle. Some people on shore fired a few musket-shots at us, but our marines soon dispersed them, and thus ended the battle of New Orleans.

The greatest praise I can bestow upon the officers of the *Iroquois* is to say that they all did their duty, and each one of them always expressed his determination to conquer. The crew and marines behaved with spirit and gallantry, which we may always expect in well-drilled Americans.

Our loss in killed and wounded, I am sorry to say, is large. One master's mate and five seamen and two marines are killed, and twenty-four wounded. Mr. George W. Cole, master's mate, was killed by a cannon-shot, and he died bravely, shouting to the men not to mind him, but go on with their guns.

The *Iroquois* is badly injured in her hull, but her masts and spars are sound, except the bowsprit and jib-boom. These are hit with large shot; all our boats are smashed, and the most of them are not worth repairs.

I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN DE CAMP, *Commander U. S. Navy.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron, New Orleans, La.*

Commander James Alden thus reports the scene on board the *Richmond*:

U. S. STEAMER *RICHMOND*, OFF NEW ORLEANS, *April 27, 1862.*

SIR: In accordance with your instructions, I herewith enclose copies of the boatswain's and carpenter's reports of the damage done to this vessel by the enemy's shot during the engagement of Forts Jackson and St. Philip on the morning of the 24th instant. The list of casualties I have already forwarded to you; it is very small, there being but two killed and four wounded. Much injury to the men, I am sure, was

saved by a carefully-prepared "splinter-netting." At one point between the guns the netting was forced out to its utmost tension; indeed, large pieces of plank were thus prevented from sweeping the deck, and perhaps destroying the men at the guns. I would therefore recommend that, in our future operations, these simple "pain-savers" or "life-preservers" be adopted in the other ships of the fleet.

I must beg leave to call your attention to another simple and very effective expedient which was resorted to on board this vessel to obtain *light*—an element so essential in a night attack on board ship. The *deck* and *gun-carriages* were *whitewashed* fore and aft, and it was truly wonderful to note the difference; where before all was darkness, now side-tackle, falls, handspikes, ammunition, and, indeed, every thing of the kind about the decks, was plainly visible by the contrast. This idea being so novel, and, at the same time, effective, I trust it will receive, through you, the notice it deserves, so that, when others are driven to the *dire necessity of a night attack*, they may have all the advantages the discovery insures.

We had much difficulty in groping our way through that "fiery channel," our ship being so slow, and the enemy was met in the "worst form for our profession," but the hand of a kind Providence gave us the victory. No men could behave better throughout that terrible ordeal than the crew of this vessel did. My thanks for support are due to them and the officers generally. I am especially indebted to Mr. Terry, our second lieutenant, for his ready and intelligent aid in the management of the ship during the action; but to Mr. Cummings, our first lieutenant, are mainly due, as far as this ship is concerned, the handsome results of that morning. By his cool and intrepid conduct the batteries were made to do their whole duty, and not a gun was pointed nor a shot sent without its mark. My thanks are due to Mr. Bogart, my clerk, who took the place of Mr. John B. Bradley, master's mate, who was shot down at my side while gallantly performing his duty as my aide. I am, sir, respectfully, etc.,

JAMES ALDEN, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer* D. G. FARRAGUT,

*commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

The gunboat Winona did not succeed in passing the forts, and the reasons are stated by Lieutenant Edward T. Nichols as follows:

After getting under way, I took my station as soon as possible in the line, astern of the Itasca, and followed her red light, but suddenly

found myself involved in a mass of logs and drift-stuff, held by the chain and moorings of the hulks. Whilst trying to back clear, the *Itasca* backed and fouled me on the starboard bow. After a delay of from twenty minutes to half an hour, I proceeded on my way, though I felt pretty sure that the bulk of the fleet had passed. Day was breaking fast, and my vessel was brought out in bold relief against the bright sky, presenting a fair mark for the gunners of the fort. Fort Jackson fired at me as I approached, and the first gun killed one man and wounded another; the third or fourth gun killed or wounded every man at the rifle gun except one. Judging that the burning raft was on the Fort Jackson side, I steered to pass it on the port hand, and did not discover my error until the whole lower battery of Fort St. Philip opened on me at less than point-blank range. Steering off with starboard helm, I shot across to the Fort Jackson side, but, owing to the obscurity caused by the smoke, got so close to the shore that I had no room to turn head up-stream, and was forced to head down. At this time both forts were firing nearly their entire batteries at me. It would have been madness to attempt turning again in such a fire; three of my men were killed, four severely wounded, and one slightly so, the vessel hulled several times, and the deck wet fore and aft from the spray of falling shot.

The *Katahdin* passed so near the guns of the forts that most of the shot went over her. The following is an extract from Lieutenant G. H. Preble's letter :

At the most critical moment of the passage, and when exposed to the fire of both forts, the fire of our pivot-gun was embarrassed and delayed by the shells jamming in the gun, their sabots being too large to fit the bore. As many as five shells were passed up before one could be found to fit the gun. Two became so jammed that the shells were torn from the sabots before they could be extracted, and the sabot of one had to be blown out and the gun reloaded. Mr. Harris, the master in charge of the pivot-gun, attributes this serious fault, first, to the swelling of the light wood of the too nicely-fitted sabot in the damp climate of this Gulf; and, second, to the shells being packed in bags instead of boxes, which allows of the sabots getting bruised even with the most careful handling.

The station assigned this vessel, close under the stern of the *Varuna*, I maintained until the dense canopy of smoke from the cannonade, aided by the night, hid every thing from our view. I ordered full speed, however, to maintain my station; and seeing, by the flash from her broad-

side, that we were passing the Mississippi, I gave orders to cease firing for a time until we had passed her, when I became engaged with the enemy's gunboats. Above the forts we passed along the broadside and within fifty yards of the iron-plated battery Louisiana, lying at anchor. To our surprise she did not fire at us, though she could have blown us out of the water. After passing her, I directed to keep the vessel off, and give her a shot from the 11-inch pivot and Parrott, which was done, and, as I have since learned from one on board of her, with good effect, tearing a hole the size of the shell through and through the iron plating of her bow.

Until beyond the fire of the forts, Acting Assistant Paymaster Ladd attended in the wardroom to give his assistance to the surgeon, but later volunteered his services in boats, and brought off to the ship refugees from the burning gunboats and the shore; he assisted, also, in disarming that portion of the Chalmette regiment which surrendered, and was encamped opposite the quarantine.

I am happy to have no casualties to report, and that the surgeon, though ready, had no opportunity to testify his skill on board. Several of the men had their clothing torn by shot or fragments of shell, but not a man was even scratched. At the request of Captain Bailey, Dr. Robinson went on board the Cayuga after the action, where he rendered efficient service to her wounded. The vessel, also, escaped without serious injury. One shell passed through the smoke-stack and steam escape-pipe and burst, making a dozen small holes from the inside outward, and another has cut about four to six inches into the foremast, while the same or another cut the foresail and some of the running rigging about the foremast, which is all the damage sustained. I attribute our escaping with so little injury to our being near the head of the line, to the rapid manner in which we passed the forts, and to our passing so close under the forts that all their shot went over our heads. I believe, also, that for a time the fire of Fort St. Philip was silenced. The two shots we received, however, were from that fort.

Lieutenant Pierce Crosby gives a somewhat minute and interesting account of the battle as it was on the Pinola, steam gunboat.

U. S. STEAM GUNBOAT PINOLA, OFF NEW ORLEANS, *April 26, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your signal on the morning of the 24th instant, after having passed your orders to the Pensacola and other vessels of the squadron, I took my position at 3.30 A. M. in line-of-battle next after the Iroquois, thinking the vessel

which was to have preceded me had taken hers in advance, which I could not ascertain at that time, and followed on in line, passing so close to one of the enemy's hulks which had been used to hold the chain-rafts, that one starboard quarter-boat was crushed against her sides; continued on our course, and as soon as Fort Jackson bore abeam of us, about four hundred yards distant, commenced firing with the 11-inch Dahlgren pivot and Parrott rifles at the flashes of the enemy's guns, that being the only guide by which to distinguish their position, which the fort answered promptly and rapidly, but, owing to our proximity, their shot passed over, with the exception of two, one of which killed Thomas Kelly, captain of the fore-castle, slightly wounding Acting-Master J. G. Lloyd, the other cutting away the launch's after-davit. I then ran over within one hundred and fifty yards of Fort St. Philip, from which we received a terrific volley of shot, canister, grape, and musketry, nearly all of which passed over us. The fire-rafts, which were burning very brightly, exposed us to the full view of the enemy, and enabled them to fire at us with great precision, while we were only able to answer their forty guns with the 20-pound rifles, the 11-inch pivot being engaged with Fort Jackson. Of those shot that struck us from Fort St. Philip, one entered our starboard quarter, cut away part of the wheel, and severely wounded William Acworth, quartermaster, who returned to his station as soon as his wounds were dressed. Acting-Master's Mate William H. Thompson promptly took the wheel at the time of the disaster. The second entered the hull at the water-line on the starboard side, eight inches forward of the boilers, passed through the coal-bunker, and lodged in the pump-well and cut the sounding-well in two. The third cut away the top of the steam escape-pipe. The fourth cut away the starboard chain-cable from the anchor, passed through the bow and yeoman's store-room, and lodged in the port side, starting off the outside planking. The fifth struck the topgallant fore-castle and carried away part of the rail. The sixth passed through the plank-shear, abreast of the 11-inch pivot-gun. The seventh struck a barricade of hammocks forward of the fore-hatch. The eighth cut away one of the dead-eyes of the starboard fore-rigging. The ninth cut a bucket from the hands of Acting-Master William P. Gibbs, in charge of the pivot-gun. The tenth knocked the rammer from the hands of Henry Harrington, loader, who soon, with the assistance of the gun's crew, made a temporary one, the spare rammer having been lost over-board at the commencement of the action. The eleventh passed entirely through the hull, immediately over the magazine, demolishing completely in its course the dispensary and its contents. The twelfth

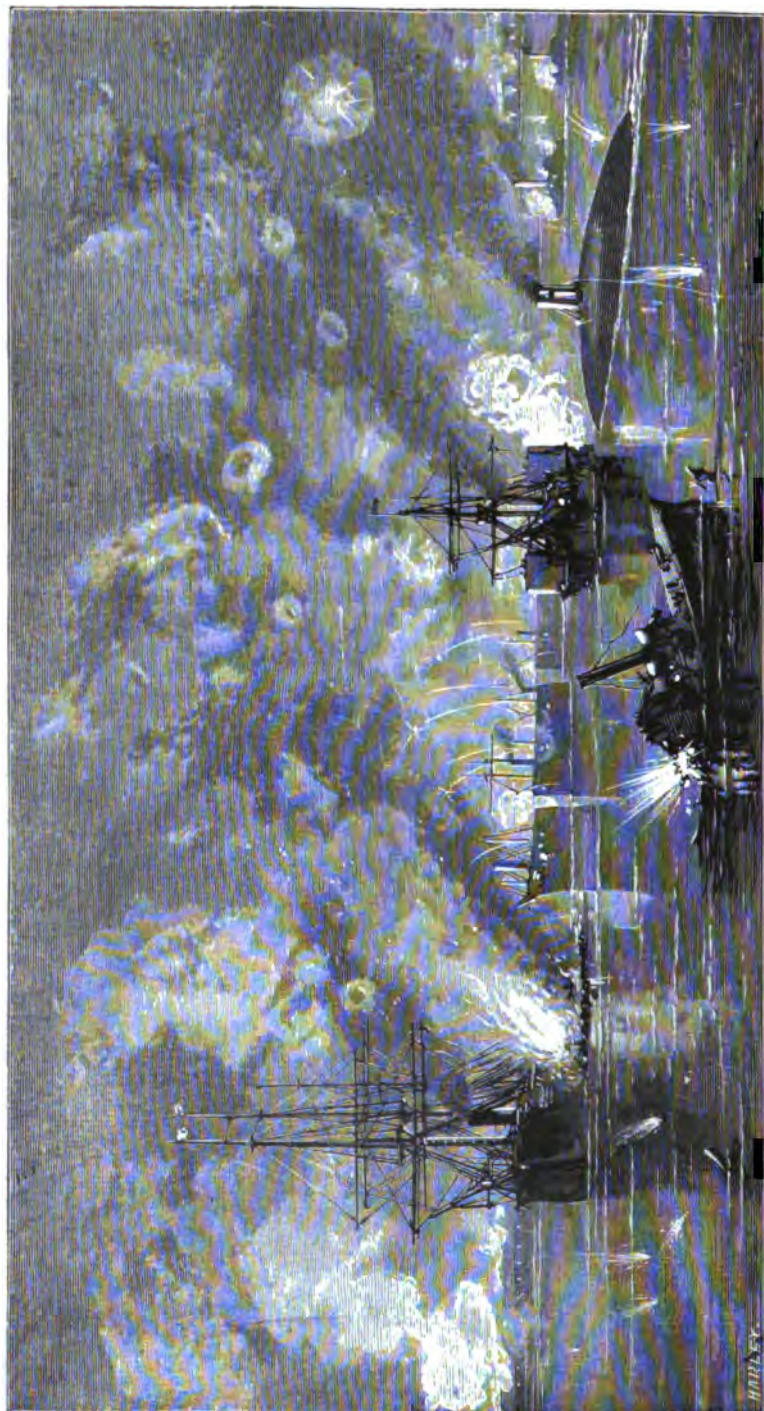
passed through the starboard and lodged in the port side of the berth-deck. These two last-mentioned shot killed John Nolta and Robert H. Johnson, landsmen, and dangerously wounded Thomas Jones, wardroom steward; Thomas Ford, landsman; Henry Stokely, wardroom cook, and Thomas L. Smith, coal-heaver, slightly; also, Thomas Foster, captain of the hold, who received dangerous and painful wounds from splinters while zealously performing his duty, completely disabling the powder division, there being but one man left to pass ammunition, with the exception of Acting-Master's Mate C. V. Rummell, in charge of his division, who immediately gave his personal assistance, although he had been knocked down a few moments previous by splinters; and James A. Bashford was slightly wounded by splinters. A number of other missiles grazed our sides, doing, however, but slight damage. Immediately following the disaster on the berth-deck, it was reported to be on fire, whereupon the gunner's mate, J. B. Frisbee, instantly closed the magazine, he remaining inside. All traces of fire having been quickly extinguished by the fireman, reinforcements to the powder division were quickly supplied, and the guns continued their fire.

After passing the forts, and out of range of their heavy cross-fire, we came suddenly in view of our squadron, which had been hidden from us by the dense smoke, and noticed at the same time a steamer on the starboard hand, which at first sight I supposed to be the *Iroquois*, but as day dawned and we approached nearer I soon discovered my mistake, and gave her a shot from the 11-inch and Parrott rifle, both of which took effect in her hull near the water-line. At this moment the iron ram *Manassas* was seen following close astern of us, and being in range of our howitzers we opened fire on her with them, aiming at her smoke-stack. The *Mississippi* being near, now turned upon her, and soon succeeded in driving her ashore and destroying her. In obedience to signal, I then ran up and anchored with the squadron off Quarantine Landing and sent ashore to destroy the telegraph wire, which I afterward learned was on the opposite bank. At 9 A. M. got under way and steamed up the river, in obedience to order, in company with the *Scioto*.

The *Kineo*, the *Wissahickon*, and the *Kennebec* were gallantly fought, but nothing was reported by their commanders as worthy of special mention. The *Kennebec* did not succeed in passing the forts. Although the forts were thus passed, they did not surrender, and the fleet, without being aware of it at the time, had left behind quite a formidable naval force, the







Hartd.

Mississippi.

Massachusetts.

FARRAGUT'S FLEET PASSING THE FORTS OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI.

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iron-clad battery Louisiana, mounting sixteen heavy guns, the McCrea, a gunboat in appearance like our own, the Defiance, and a river steamboat. Without returning to capture these, Admiral Farragut determined to press on directly to New Orleans. The Cayuga again took the lead of the fleet in steaming up the river, and when too far ahead to be at once supported by the other ships, she encountered the Chalmette batteries, mounting about twenty guns, which opened upon her a galling cross-fire. To this the gunboat could respond with only two guns, and yet she sustained the unequal combat for twenty minutes, when the Hartford, which had been exposed to a raking fire in approaching, ranged up, and, bringing her broadside to bear, the batteries were silenced very soon by her fire, and that of the vessels which shortly came up and joined in the fight.

The river now presented an awful scene of wanton destruction, or the ruin wrought by despair. It was covered by the burning wrecks of ships loaded with cotton, of burning steamers, and every kind of implement used in ship-yards and docks came floating down. The formidable iron-clad Mississippi, which was to be the terror of the seas, and which the rebels had not been able to finish, came floating down in flames. Another of these rams was sunk just in front of the custom-house, and others had been just begun in Algiers, opposite New Orleans. The levee at New Orleans was one scene of burning ruin. Ships, steamers, cotton, coal, every combustible thing was ablaze, and whatever would burn while afloat was in flames upon the river, so that it was difficult for our ships to avoid the fires that were burning on every side. Excited multitudes were yelling and setting fires, some brandishing weapons, and some plundering what was scattered about, and many hurling impotent defiance at the frowning broadsides of the fleet when the vessels had anchored in front of the town. There were some very formidable works eight miles above the city at Carrollton, one of which mounted twenty-nine guns, and on the opposite side was another battery mounting six guns. These works were deserted, and the guns were spiked. There was found also an immense boom here, which was constructed, with great labor, for the purpose of stopping any hostile

vessels coming from above. It is well described by Admiral Farragut in his report:

We discovered here, fastened to the right bank of the river, one of the most herculean labors I have ever seen—a raft and chain to extend across the river to prevent Foote's gunboats from descending. It is formed by placing three immense logs of not less than three or four feet in diameter and some thirty feet long; to the centre, one or two-inch chain is attached, running lengthwise the raft, and the three logs and chain are then frapped together by chains from one-half to one inch, three or four layers, and there are ninety-six of these lengths composing the raft; it is at least three-quarters of a mile long.

Immediately upon the arrival of Admiral Farragut before the city, he sent Captain Bailey on shore to demand the surrender of the town. The correspondence which ensued is among the curious records of the war, disclosing the intensely bitter spirit of the rebel officials, and the insolent manner which they could assume when completely at the mercy of their conquerors. These letters are quite worthy of a place in history, and they are therefore inserted here.

No. 1.

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 26, 1862. }

SIR: Upon my arrival before your city I had the honor to send to your honor Captain Bailey, U. S. N., second in command of the expedition, to demand of you the surrender of New Orleans to me, as the representative of the Government of the United States. Captain Bailey reported to me the result of an interview with yourself and the military authorities. It must occur to your honor that it is not within the province of a naval officer to assume the duties of a military commandant. I came here to reduce New Orleans to obedience to the laws of, and to vindicate the offended majesty of the Government of the United States. The rights of persons and property shall be secure. I therefore demand of you, as its representative, the unqualified surrender of the city, and that the emblem of sovereignty of the United States be hoisted over the city hall, mint, and custom-house by meridian this day, and that all flags and other emblems of sovereignty other than those of the United States shall be removed from all the public buildings by that hour. I particularly request that you shall exercise your authority to quell dis-

turbances, restore order, and call upon all the good people of New Orleans to return at once to their vocations; and I particularly demand that no person shall be molested in person or property for professing sentiments of loyalty to their Government. I shall speedily and severely punish any person or persons who shall commit such outrages as were witnessed yesterday, armed men firing upon helpless women and children for giving expression to their pleasure at witnessing the old flag.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Squadron.*

*His Excellency the Mayor of the City of New Orleans.*

No. 2.

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 26, 1862. }

Your honor will please give directions that no flag but that of the United States will be permitted to fly in the presence of this fleet so long as it has the power to prevent it; and as all displays of that kind may be the cause of bloodshed, I have to request that you will give this communication as general a circulation as possible.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*His Honor the Mayor of New Orleans.*

No. 3.

General Order.]

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 26, 1862. }

Eleven o'clock this morning is the hour appointed for all the officers and crews of the fleet to return thanks to Almighty God for His great goodness and mercy in permitting us to pass through the events of the last two days with so little loss of life and blood.

At that hour the church pennant will be hoisted on every vessel of the fleet, and their crews assembled will, in humiliation and prayer, make their acknowledgments therefore to the Great Dispenser of all human events.

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

MAYORALTY OF NEW ORLEANS, CITY HALL, April 26, 1862.

SIR: In pursuance of the resolution which he thought proper to take, out of regard for the lives of the women and children who still crowd this great metropolis, General Lovell has evacuated it with his

troops, and restored back to me the administration of its government and the custody of its honor.

I have, in concert with the city fathers, considered the demand you made of me on yesterday of an unconditional surrender of the city, coupled with a requisition to hoist up the flag of the United States on the public edifices, and to haul down that which still floated to the breeze from the dome of this hall; and it becomes my duty to transmit to you the answer which the universal sentiment of my constituency, no less than the promptings of my own heart, dictate to me on this sad and solemn occasion.

The city is without means of defence, and utterly destitute of the force and material that might enable it to resist the overpowering armament displayed in sight of it.

I am no military man, and possess no authority beyond that of executing the municipal laws of the city of New Orleans. It would be presumptuous in me to attempt to lead an army to the field, if I had one at my command, and I know still less how to surrender an undefended place, held as this is at the mercy of your gunners and mouths of your mortars. To surrender such a place were an idle and unmeaning ceremony. The city is yours by the power of brutal force, and not by any choice or consent of its inhabitants. It is for you to determine what shall be the fate that awaits her.

As to the hoisting of any flag than the flag of our own adoption and allegiance, let me say to you, sir, that the man lives not in our midst whose hand and heart would not be palsied at the mere thought of such an act, nor could I find in my entire constituency so wretched and desperate a renegade as would dare to profane with his hand the sacred emblem of our aspirations.

Sir, you have manifested sentiments which would become one engaged in a better cause than that to which you have devoted your sword. I doubt not but that they spring from a noble but deluded nature, and I know how to appreciate the emotions which inspire them. You will have a gallant people to administer during your occupation of this city; a people sensitive of all that can in the least affect its dignity and self-respect. Pray, sir, do not allow them to be insulted by the interference of such as have rendered themselves odious and contemptible by the dastardly desertion of the mighty struggle in which we are engaged, nor of such as might remind them too painfully that they are the conquered and you the conquerors. Peace and order may be preserved without a resort to measures which could not fail to wound their susceptibilities and fire up their passions.

The obligations which I shall assume in their name shall be religiously complied with. You may trust their honor, though you might not count on their submission to unmerited wrong.

In conclusion, I beg you to understand that the people of New Orleans, while unable at this moment to prevent you from occupying this city, do not transfer their allegiance from the government of their choice to one which they have deliberately repudiated, and that they yield simply that obedience which the conqueror is enabled to extort from the conquered.

Since writing the above, which is an answer to your verbal communication of yesterday, I have received a written communication, to which I shall reply before 12 o'clock m., if possible to prepare an answer in that time.

Respectfully,

JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. Flag-Ship Hartford.*

CITY HALL, April 25, 1862.

*Honorable Common Council :*

GENTLEMEN : At half-past 1 o'clock P. M. to-day I was waited on by Captain Bailey, second in command of the Federal fleet now lying in front of the city, bearing a demand from Flag-Officer Farragut for the unconditional surrender of the city of New Orleans, and hoisting of the United States flag on the custom-house, post-office, and mint. He also demanded that the Louisiana flag should be hauled down from the city hall. I replied that General Lovell was in command here, and that I was without authority to act in military matters. General Lovell was then sent for, and to him, after stating that his mission was to the mayor and council, Captain Bailey addressed his demands.

General Lovell refused to surrender the city or his forces, or any portion of them; but accompanied his refusal with the statement that he should evacuate the city, withdraw his troops, and then leave the civil authorities to act as they might deem proper.

It is proper here to state that, in reply to the demand to haul down the flag from the city hall, I returned an unqualified refusal.

I am now in momentary expectation of receiving a second peremptory demand for the surrender of the city. I solicit your advice in the emergency. My own opinion is, that, as a civil magistrate, possessed of no military power, I am incompetent to perform a military act such as the surrender of the city to a hostile force; that it would be proper to say, in reply to a demand of that character, that we are without military protection; that the troops have withdrawn from the city; that we



are consequently incapable of making any resistance, and therefore we can offer no obstruction to the occupation of the place by the enemy; that the custom-house, post-office, and mint are the property of the Confederate government, and that we have no control over them; and that all acts involving a transfer of authority be performed by the invading forces themselves; that we yield to physical force alone, and that we maintain our allegiance to the government of the Confederate States. Beyond this a due respect for our dignity, our rights, and the flag of our country, does not, I think, permit us to go.

Respectfully, JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor*.

The above message, which want of time prevented me from having copied, I enclose for information.

Respectfully, JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor*.  
Per MARION N. BAKER, *Secretary*.

MAYORALTY OF NEW ORLEANS, CITY HALL, *April 26, 1862.*

*Common Council of the City of New Orleans—No. 6,002.*

The Common Council of the City of New Orleans, having been advised by the military authorities that the city is indefensible, declare that no resistance will be made to the forces of the United States.

*Resolved*, That the sentiments expressed in the message of his honor the mayor to the Common Council are in perfect accordance with the sentiments entertained by these councils and by the entire population of this metropolis, and that the mayor be respectfully requested to act in the spirit manifested by the message.

S. P. DE LABARRE, *Pres. pro tem. of Board of Aldermen.*

J. MAGIONI, *Pres. of the Board of Assistant Aldermen.*

Approved April 26, 1862.

JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor*.

A true copy:

MARION N. BAKER, *Secretary to Mayor*.

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, *April 28, 1862.* }

SIR: Your communication of the 26th instant has been received, together with that of the city councils.

I deeply regret to see, both by their contents and the continued display of the flag of Louisiana on the court-house, a determination on the part of the city authorities not to haul it down. Moreover, when my officers and men were sent on shore to communicate with the authorities and to hoist the United States flag on the custom-house, with the strictest orders not to use their arms unless assailed, they were insulted in the

grossest manner, and the flag which had been hoisted by my orders on the mint was pulled down and dragged through the streets. All of which go to show that the fire of this fleet may be drawn upon the city at any moment, and, in such an event, the levee would, in all probability, be cut by the shells, and an amount of distress ensue to the innocent population which I have heretofore endeavored to assure you that I desired by all means to avoid. The election is therefore with you; but it becomes my duty to notify you to remove the women and children from the city within forty-eight hours, if I have rightly understood your determination. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*His Honor the Mayor and City Council of the City of New Orleans.*

MAYORALTY OF NEW ORLEANS, CITY HALL, *April 28, 1862.*

*To the Common Council:*

GENTLEMEN: I herewith transmit to you a communication from Flag-Officer Farragut, commanding the United States fleet now lying in front of the city. I have informed the officer bearing the communication that I would lay it before you, and return such answer as the city authorities might think proper to be made.

In the mean time permit me to suggest that Flag-Officer Farragut appears to have misunderstood the position of the city of New Orleans. He had been distinctly informed that at this moment the city has no power to impede the exercise of such acts of forcible authority as the commander of the United States naval forces may choose to exercise, and that therefore no resistance would be offered to the occupation of the city by the United States forces.

If it is deemed necessary to remove the flag now floating from this building, or to raise United States flags on others, the power which threatened the destruction of our city is certainly capable of performing those acts. New Orleans is not now a military post; there is no military commander within its limits; it is like an unoccupied fortress, of which an assailant may at any moment take possession. But I do not believe that the constituency represented by you or by me embraces one loyal citizen who would be willing to incur the odium of tearing down the symbol representing the State authority to which New Orleans owes her municipal existence. I am deeply sensible of the distress which would be brought upon our community by a consummation of the inhuman threat of the United States commander; but I cannot conceive that those who so recently declared themselves to be animated by a

Christian spirit, and by a regard for the rights of private property, would venture to incur, for themselves and the Government they represent, the universal execration of the civilized world by attempting to achieve, through a wanton destruction of life and property, that which they can accomplish without bloodshed, and without a resort to those hostile measures which the law of nations condemns and execrates, when employed upon the defenceless women and children of an unresisting city.

Respectfully, JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor*.

MAYORALTY OF NEW ORLEANS, CITY HALL, *April 28, 1862.*

SIR: Your communication of this morning is the first intimation I ever had that it was by "*your strict orders*" that the United States flag was attempted to be hoisted upon certain of our public edifices by officers sent on shore to communicate with the authorities. The officers who approached me in your name disclosed no such orders, and intimated no such designs on your part; nor could I have for a moment entertained the remotest suspicion that they could have been invested with powers to enter on such an errand while the negotiations for a surrender between you and the city authorities were still pending. The interference of any force under your command, as long as these negotiations were not brought to a close, could not be viewed by me otherwise than as a flagrant violation of those courtesies, if not of the absolute rights, which prevail between belligerents under such circumstances. My views and my sentiments in reference to such conduct remain unchanged.

You now renew the demands made in your former communication, and you insist on their being complied with, unconditionally, under a threat of bombardment within forty-eight hours; and you notify me to remove the women and children from the city, that they may be protected from your shells.

Sir, you cannot but know that there is no possible exit from this city for a population which still exceeds in number one hundred and forty thousand, and you must therefore be aware of the utter inanity of such a notification. Our women and children cannot escape from your shells, if it be your pleasure to murder them on a question of mere etiquette. But if they could, there are but few among them who would consent to desert their families and their homes, and the graves of their relatives in so awful a moment. They would bravely stand the sight of your shells rolling over the bones of those who were once dear to them, and would deem that they died not ingloriously by the side of the tombs erected by their piety to the memory of departed relatives.

You are not satisfied with the peaceable possession of an undefended city, opposing no resistance to your guns, because of its bearing its doom with something of manliness and dignity, and you wish to humble and disgrace us by the performance of an act against which our nature rebels. This satisfaction you cannot expect to obtain at our hands. We will stand your bombardment, unarmed and undefended as we are. The civilized world will consign to indelible infamy the heart that will conceive the deed and the hand that will dare to consummate it

Respectfully, JOHN T. MONROE, *Mayor.*

*Mr. FARRAGUT, Flag-Officer of the United States Fleet  
in front of the City of New Orleans.*

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 28, 1862. }

SIR: Hereafter, when I desire to communicate with the authorities, I will hoist a square flag with a diagonal red cross, when, if your honor will send your secretary, or any other person, to receive my communication to the shore opposite to the ship bearing that flag, a boat will be sent with an officer to deliver the document.

When the city authorities desire to communicate with me, by the messenger holding his handkerchief by two corners opposite the ship, a boat will be sent for him or his communication.

As my duties may call me away from before the city for a short time, I request that you will send your reply to any other vessel that may be present. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron  
His Honor the Mayor of New Orleans.*

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 29, 1862. }

SIR: The Forts St. Philip and Jackson having surrendered, and all the military defences of the city being captured or abandoned, you are required, as the sole representative of any supposed authority in the city, to haul down and suppress every ensign and symbol of government, whether State or Confederate, except that of the United States. I am now about to raise the flag of the United States upon the custom-house, and you will see that it is respected with all the civil power of the city.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.  
His Honor the Mayor of the City of New Orleans.*

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, April 30, 1862. }

GENTLEMEN: I informed you, in my communication of the 28th of April, that your determination, as I understood it, was not to haul down the flag of Louisiana on the city hall, and that my officers and men were treated with insult and rudeness when they landed, even with a flag of truce, to communicate with the authorities, etc., and if such was to be the determined course of the people, the fire of the vessels might at any moment be drawn upon the city. This you have thought proper to construe into a determination on my part to murder your women and children, and made your letter so offensive that it will terminate our intercourse; and so soon as General Butler arrives with his forces, I shall turn over the charge of the city to him and assume my naval duties.

Very respectfully, etc.,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*His Honor the Mayor and City Council of New Orleans.*

Pending these negotiations the admiral took possession of the city and hoisted on the custom-house the American flag, and thus the city of New Orleans was regained by the Navy before the Army arrived. On the 28th of April Forts St. Philip and Jackson surrendered to Commander D. D. Porter, who had been left below with the mortar-flotilla. What followed below, and at the forts after the passage of the fleet, is thus described by Commander Porter himself:

Immediately on the passage of the ships, I sent Lieutenant-Commanding Guest up with a flag of truce, demanding the surrender of the forts. The flag of truce was fired on, but apologized for afterward. The answer was, "The demand is inadmissible!" Giving the men that day to rest, I prepared to fill up the vessels with ammunition, and commence the bombardment again. Having, in the mean time, heard from Flag-Officer Farragut that he had safely passed the batteries, I determined to make another attempt on these deluded people in the forts to make them surrender, and save the further effusion of blood. Flag-Officer Farragut had unknowingly left a troublesome force in his rear, consisting of four steamers and a powerful steam battery of four thousand tons and sixteen heavy guns, all protected by the forts. I did not know in what condition the battery was, only we had learned that she had come down the night before, ready prepared to wipe out our whole fleet. If the enemy counted so surely on destroying our

whole fleet with her, it behooved me to be prudent, and not let the mortar vessels be sacrificed like the vessels at Norfolk. I commenced, then, a bombardment on the iron-clad battery, supposing it lay close under Fort Jackson, and also set the vessels to work throwing shells into Fort Jackson again, to let them know that we were still taking care of them; but there was no response—the fight had all been taken out of them. I sent the mortar-vessels below to refit and prepare for sea, as also to prevent them from being driven from their position in case the iron battery came out to attack them. I felt sure that the steamers alone could manage the battery. Six of the schooners I ordered to proceed immediately to the rear of Fort Jackson and blockade all the bayous, so that the garrison could not escape or obtain supplies. I sent the Miami and Sachem to the rear of Fort St. Philip, to assist in landing troops. These vessels all appeared at their destination at the same time, and when morning broke the enemy found himself hemmed in on all sides. It was a military necessity that we should have the forts. Our squadron was cut off from coal, provisions, and ammunition; our soldiers had but little chance to get to New Orleans through shallow bayous; the enemy in the city would hesitate to surrender while the forts held out; communication was cut off between them, and neither party knew what the other was willing to do. So I demanded a surrender again, through Lieutenant-Commanding Guest, offering to let them retain their side-arms and engage not to serve against the United States during the rebellion until regularly exchanged, provided they would honorably deliver up, *undamaged*, the forts, guns, muskets, provisions, and all munitions of war, the vessels under the guns of the fort, and all other public property. The answer was civil, and hopes were held out that, after being instructed by the authorities of New Orleans, they would surrender. In the mean time their men became dissatisfied at being so surrounded; they had no hope of longer holding out with any chance of success, and gave signs of insubordination. On the 28th a flag of truce came on board the Harriet Lane, proposing to surrender Jackson and St. Philip on the terms proposed, and I immediately proceeded to the forts, with the steamers Westfield, Winona, and Kennebec in company, and sent a boat for General Duncan and Lieutenant-Colonel Higgins, and such persons as they might see fit to bring with them. These persons came on board, and, proceeding to the cabin of the Harriet Lane, the capitulation was drawn up and signed, the original of which I have had the honor of forwarding to the department by Captain Bailey, no opportunity occurring to send it through Flag-Officer Farragut without loss of time. The officers late

commanding the forts informed me that the vessels would not be included in the capitulation, as they (the military) had nothing to do with the naval officers, and were in no way responsible for their acts. There was evidently a want of unanimity between the different branches of the rebel service. I afterward found out that great ill-feeling existed, the naval commander having failed, in the opinion of the military, to coöperate with the forts; the true state of the case being that they were both sadly beaten, and each laid the blame on the other. While engaged in the capitulation, an officer came below and informed me that the iron floating-battery (the Louisiana) had been set on fire by two steamers which had been lying alongside of her. This was a magnificent iron steam floating-battery, of four thousand tons and mounting sixteen heavy guns, and perfectly shot-proof. She had been brought down from New Orleans the day before, and on it the hopes of their salvation seemed to depend, as will appear by the following letter from General Duncan, taken in the fort:

"FORT JACKSON, LA., April 22, 1862.

"CAPTAIN: Your note of this date, relative to the steamer Louisiana, the forwardness of her preparations for attack, the dispositions to be made of her, etc., has been received.

"It is of vital importance that the present fire of the enemy should be withdrawn from us, which you alone can do. This can be done in the manner suggested this morning, under the cover of our guns, while your work on the boat can still be carried on in safety and security. Our position is a critical one, dependent entirely on the powers of endurance of our casemates, many of which have been completely shattered, and are crumbling away by repeated shocks, and therefore I respectfully, but earnestly, again urge my suggestions of this morning upon your notice. Our magazines are also in danger.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"J. K. DUNCAN, *Brigadier-General*.

"Captain J. K. MITCHELL,

"*commanding Naval Forces Lower Mississippi River.*"

I was in hopes of saving this vessel as a prize, for she would have been so materially useful to us in all future operations on the coast, her batteries and strength being sufficient to silence any fort here, aided by the other vessels. Seeing her lying so quiet, with colors down and the two steamers under our guns, I never dreamed for a moment that they had not surrendered. The forts and ourselves had flags of truce flying, and I could not make any movement without violating the honor of

the United States and interrupting the capitulation which was being drawn up. The burning of the vessels was done so quietly that no one suspected it until the battery was in a blaze. I merely remarked to the commanders of the forts that the act was in no way creditable to the rebel commander. The reply was, "We are not responsible for the acts of these naval officers!" We proceeded with the conference, and while so engaged, an officer came to inform me that the iron-clad battery was all in flames and drifting down on us, having burnt the ropes that had fastened her to the bank. I inquired of the late commanders of the forts if they knew if the guns were loaded, or if she had much powder on board. The answer was, "I presume so, but we know nothing about the naval matters here!" At this moment the guns, being heated, commenced going off, with a probability of throwing shot and shell amidst friend and foe. I did not deign to notice it, further than to say to the military officers, "If you don't mind the effects of the explosion which is soon to come, we can stand it." If the ever-memorable Commander Mitchell calculated to make a stampede in the United States vessels by his infamous act, he was mistaken; none of them moved, or intended to move, and the conference was carried on as calmly as if nothing else was going on, though proper precautions were taken to keep them clear of the burning battery. A good Providence, which directs the most unimportant events, sent the battery off toward Fort St. Philip, and as it got abreast of that formidable fort it blew up with a force which scattered the fragments in all directions, killing one of their own men in Fort St. Philip, and when the smoke cleared off it was nowhere to be seen, having sunk immediately in the deep water of the Mississippi. The explosion was terrific, and was seen and heard for many miles up and down the river. Had it occurred near the vessels, it would have destroyed every one of them. This, no doubt, was the object of the arch-traitor who was the instigator of the act. He failed to coöperate, like a man, with his military confederates, who looked to the means he had at his disposal to save them from destruction, and who scorned alike his want of courage in not assisting them, as well as the unheard-of and perfidious act which might, in a measure, have reflected on them.

How different was the course of the military commanders, who, though engaged in so bad a cause, behaved honorably to the end! Every article in the fort was delivered up undamaged. Nothing was destroyed, either before the capitulation, or while the capitulation was going on, or afterward. The most scrupulous regard was paid to their promises. They defended their works like men, and had they been



fighting for the flag under which they were born, instead of against it, it would have been honor enough for any man to have said he had fought by their side.

After the capitulation was signed, I sent Commander W. B. Renshaw to Fort Jackson, and Lieutenant-Commanding Ed. Nichols to Fort St. Philip, to receive the surrender of the forts. The rebel flag was hauled down, and the stars and stripes once more floated over the property of the United States. The sun never shone on a more contented and happy-looking set of faces than those of the prisoners in and about the forts. Many of them had not seen their families for months, and a large portion had been pressed into a service distasteful to them, subject to the rigor of a discipline severe beyond measure. They were frequently exposed to punishments, for slight causes, which the human frame could scarcely endure, and the men who underwent some of the tortures mentioned on a list of punishments I have in my possession must have been unable afterward to do any duty for months to come. Instead of the downcast countenances of conquered people, they emerged from the fort (going home on their parole) like a parcel of happy school-boys in holiday times, and no doubt they felt like them also.

Joseph Harris, of the United States Coast Survey, has furnished the following interesting statement concerning the forts:

SOUTHWEST PASS, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, *May 4, 1862.*

SIR: While engaged in the survey of the injuries received by Fort Jackson during the bombardment and the passage of the fleet, several incidents came under my notice, which, at your request, I have now the honor to submit to you in writing.

While waiting for the boat to take us off, on the last day on which we were engaged in the survey, Mr. Oltmanns and I fell into conversation with some men who had been in the fort as part of the garrison. One of them, who said he was a New-Yorker, particularly informed us—a reliable, intelligent man, from the moderation of his statements—and I think his information well worthy of note. I shall merely record his statements, as the conversation on our part, which drew forth information on the points where we especially desired, is not necessary to the understanding of them, and this communication is likely to be very long without the introduction of any irrelevant matter.

General J. K. Duncan had command of both forts, and Colonel Higgins, who some years ago was an officer of the United States Navy, had the immediate command of Fort Jackson. Colonel Higgins has

the credit of being a most brave and vigilant officer. For forty-eight hours my informant thought Colonel Higgins had not left the ramparts, and never seemed in the least disconcerted when the bombs were falling thickest around him.

A large proportion of the forces inside the fort were Northern men; and there were also many foreigners. The party that seized the fort early in 1861 was a company of German Yagers, and there were a number of Irish also. In all there were some six hundred or seven hundred men in the fort at the time of the bombardment. The Northern men were mostly sent down at an early stage of the proceedings, and I imagine most of them volunteered, hoping in that way to avoid suspicion, and, perhaps, not to have to fight against the Government after all. (Colonel Higgins had no expectation of being attacked; that is, he thought no fleet could be brought against him sufficiently strong to risk an attack.)

There was a company of sharpshooters attached to the forces under the command of Captain Mullen. They numbered about two hundred, and were largely recruited from the "riffraff" of New Orleans. They scouted as far down as eight or nine miles below the forts, and brought nightly reports to Fort Jackson, travelling by the bayous and passes on the southwest side of the river. The main body, however, lay in the edge of the woods below Fort Jackson, about a mile and a half from it. From here they fired on the boat that pulled up under that shore on the 14th. The grape and canister shot that the Owasco threw into the bushes made their berth uncomfortable, and they broke up their camp, came into the fort all wet and draggled, having thrown many of their arms away, and swore that they would go to New Orleans; and they went.

My informant voluntarily gave the credit of reducing the fort to the "bomb-fleet." The fort was so much shaken by this firing that it was feared the casemates would come down about their ears. The loss of life by the bombs was not great, as they could see them coming plainly, and get out of the way; but the effects of their fall and explosion no skill could avert. About one shell in twenty failed to explode, even those that fell in the water going off as well as the others. It is well worth noting that the bombs that fell in the ditch close to the walls of the fort, and exploded there, shook the fort much more severely than any of those that buried themselves in the solid ground.

The firing was most destructive the first day, and the vessels lying on the northeast side of the river, which were in plain view of the forts, made much the most effective shots. The bomb-vessels lying on the

other side of the river were at all times totally invisible, the best glasses failing to distinguish their bush tops from the trees around them.

During the bombardment the only guns that were much used were the rifled guns, of which there were three, and the four 10-inch columbiads and Dahlgren 8-inch guns, eight in number. The mortars (in the fort) fired occasionally. One of the rifled guns, mounted on the fort proper before the bombardment, was sent two days before the fire opened to Island No. 10. One of the rifles in the water-battery was originally one of the barbette guns, a 32-pounder. It was sent to New Orleans to be rifled, and a week after, the second one was sent; but the first, on trial, proving a failure, the second was not changed. The large columbiad in the water-battery was made somewhere in Secessia, but exactly where my informant did not know.

The fort was in perfect order when the bombardment commenced, it having always been very strictly policed, and the dirt, which now disfigures every thing, is the accumulation of a few days. The water did not enter the fort until the levee had been broken with bombs, and during the summer of 1861, when the Mississippi was even higher, the parade-ground was entirely dry. There was very little sickness in the fort, the water probably not having stood long enough to create miasma. The discipline in the fort was very strict; but what seemed to be felt more than the strictness was the bringing in of very young and entirely inexperienced officers, who were placed in command of others much their superiors in knowledge. Suspected men were closely watched, and the punishment for improper talk among them was to tie a rope around the offenders and let them float in the stinking ditch. The impression we derived from this part of the conversation, however, was that the fort was very well governed, and that the man who was speaking had not often come under the displeasure of the authorities, for he was not eloquent on the subject of his wrongs.

The chain, as first stretched across the river, was quite a formidable obstacle. The chain was brought from Pensacola, and was a very heavy one. It was supported by heavy logs, thirty feet long, only a few feet apart, to the under side of each of which the chain was pinned near the up-stream end. The chain was kept from sagging down too far by seven heavy anchors, from which small chains ran to the main chain. These anchors were buoyed with can-buoys taken from Pilot Town. In a few months a raft formed on the upper side of this chain which reached up to the forts, and its weight swept away the whole obstruction, and went to sea, carrying the buoys with it. It was then replaced by the lighter chain, buoyed by hulks there, three weeks ago. Two of the

large can-buoys were placed in the magazine in the water-battery. The night that Flag-Officer Farragut's fleet passed up, Colonel Higgins was so sure of destroying it that he allowed the first vessel to come up with the fort before opening fire, fearing that they would be driven back prematurely and escape him. When they succeeded in passing, he remarked, "Our cake is all dough; we may as well give it up."

During this engagement a Captain Jones, from the back country, had charge of those casemate-guns which were firing hot shot. He depressed the muzzles of his guns very considerably, fearing to fire too high, and, being desirous of working his guns vigorously, had them run out with a jerk, the consequence of which was that the balls rolled harmlessly into the moat, and the guns blazed away powder and haywads at a most destructive rate. This continued until some of the officers on the ramparts, observing how much his shot fell short, told him of it. He then commenced operations on one *particular vessel*, which he kept at until some one informed him that he was devoting himself to one of their own chain-hulks.

The enemy's gunboats did not come up to the expectations that were formed of them. The Louisiana, especially, was very much relied on, but her crew of two hundred men were drunk at the time that they should have done their duty best. I could not find out any thing about her from this man, as he had never been aboard of her, and did not believe the exaggerated stories that were told here about her.

The small loss of life in the fort is due, to a great extent, to the fact that the men have been carefully kept below, only the guns' crews being allowed out of shelter. The New-Yorker was a powder-passer for the battery in which the rifled gun and the large columbiads of the main fort were, and, therefore, had a good opportunity of seeing what went on, they being in pretty constant use. One bomb broke into the officers' mess-room while they were at dinner, and rolled on the floor; as it lay between them and the door they could not escape, but all gathered in a corner and remained there in terrible suspense until it became evident that the fuse had gone out, and they were safe.

On the first night of the firing, when the citadel and outhouses were all in flames, the magazine was in very great danger for some time, and a profuse supply of wet blankets was all that saved it; there was great consternation that night, but afterward the garrison got used to it and were very cool. A bomb broke into the secret passage cut in the fort. One of the soldiers went into it some distance, when he was discovered by General Duncan and ordered out. The passage was then filled up and a guard placed over the entrance to keep every one away from

it. This was told me by Major Santelle, commandant of the fort. Fort Jackson mounted thirty-three 32-pounders on main parapet, two columbiads on main parapet, one rifled gun on main parapet, two columbiads in second bastion, one 9-inch mortar in second bastion, one columbiad in third bastion, two 8-inch mortars in third bastion, eight 32-pounders in northwest casemates, six 32-pounder guns in northeast casemates, ten short guns in bastion casemates, two brass field-pieces, two rifled guns in water-battery, one 10-inch columbiad in water-battery, one 9-inch columbiad in water-battery, three 32-pounder guns on outer curtain—seventy-five guns in all. I am not positive about the calibre of the guns. Those that I have called 32-pounders had a calibre of 8.4 inches, and I am not quite positive that there are ten short 32-pounder guns in the bastion casemates, though such is my recollection. Of these guns four were dismantled, but I could not see that the gun proper was injured in any case; of the gun-carriages eleven were struck, several of them being entirely destroyed; and of the traverses no less than thirty were injured. A large proportion of the last injured were on the western side of the outer curtain (where only these guns were mounted), twenty out of thirty-nine being more or less injured.

The ramparts of the fort proper were very severely damaged on every side, but particularly on the two northern ones; there has been great patching with sand-bags needed. Several of the entrances from the parade-ground under the ramparts are masses of ruins, some of them being one-third choked up with debris. The casemates are cracked from end to end; one of the bastion casemates has the roof broken through in three places; another in one place, and its walls are so badly cracked that daylight shines through very plainly, the cracks being about four inches wide. The entrances to the casemates are nearly all damaged, the roofs cracked, and masses of brick thrown down or loosened. All the buildings were destroyed by fire or bomb-shells, the two western bastions and the citadel being completely burned out. The walls of the citadel are cracked in many places very badly. Eighty-six shot and splinters of shell struck its faces. The amount of damage here reported would hardly be credited by any one who had taken a casual survey of the premises, and I myself should have considered it exaggerated if I had read it after passing through hastily the first time. After careful examination, however, the impression left on my mind is of a place far gone on the road to ruin, which will stand but little more before it will come down about its defenders' ears. Every thing about the fort appears to have started from its place, some hardly perceptible, others so much that it would be hard to find where the proper place is.

I do not profess an acquaintance with such matters, but it looks to me as if the whole structure would have to be demolished and rebuilt if the Government ever intend to fortify the site again.

I have thus, sir, hastily thrown together the more important part of the information I was able to collect; had my time been more extended I might have been able to gather more of the incidents of the siege; and had I supposed it desirable to reduce it to writing, I might have obtained a fuller account from those I did question; but my conversation was merely to gratify my own curiosity, and pass away an unoccupied hour. Hoping that you may find this communication of some value, I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH HARRIS.

F. H. GERDES, Esq., *Assistant United States Coast Survey.*

That the reader may have a more definite idea of the peril of the ships in their passage through this barrier of fire which stretched across the river from fort to fort, as wide as the range of their guns, a sheet of flame crossed every instant, and in every direction, by shot and shells, the following general account of injuries which they received in the battle, with the forts alone, is copied from an account furnished by Admiral Porter: The Hartford was struck in the hull fourteen times; the Pensacola, nine; the Brooklyn, sixteen; the Oneida, one; the Mississippi, ten; the Iroquois, sixteen; the Richmond, eighteen; the Winona, three; the Katahdin, two; the Itasca, fourteen; the Cayuga, in hull and rigging, forty-two; the Pinola, twelve; the Kineo, four; the Harriet Lane, two—in all, one hundred and sixty-five times. In the whole action, including the fight with the forts and near the city, the fleet lost as follows: killed, thirty-seven; wounded, one hundred and forty-seven—total killed and wounded, one hundred and eighty-four.

The reader who has never been on board a ship in battle, or seen one immediately after a fight, may be pleased to have a more definite account of the effects of shot. Such an account is therefore given of the damage which one vessel, the Brooklyn, received in this action:

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP BROOKLYN, OFF NEW ORLEANS, LA., *April 28, 1862.*

SIR: In obedience to your order we, the undersigned, have examined the ship as to the extent of injuries we received in our engagements with

the forts and vessels in the river on the 24th instant, and with the batteries below the city on the 25th instant, and make the following report:

1. A shot on starboard bow, cutting through the plank, timber, and ceiling, passing through the storeroom, shattering the fore and aft piece and the deck beam, and striking the lodger knee and breaking it badly, destroying in its progress three coils of large rope, and the interior work to considerable extent, and shattered the water-way below the berth-deck, and lodged there.

2. A shot on starboard bow, coming through the plank timbers and iron bracing, passing through the marines' storeroom, destroying a quantity of clothing and other stores, and lodged on the port side, between the knees and deck, breaking one of the main beams amidships.

3. A shell struck the starboard bow, near the wood ends, and exploded, making a large hole and shattering the plank to a considerable extent. We cannot ascertain the extent of injury it has done, as it is impossible to get at it at present.

4. A shot on starboard side, just abaft fore channels, came through, destroying two lodger knees, crossing the deck, striking and shattering one of the hanging knees, and struck the side and fell on deck.

5. A shot, just forward the mainmast, came through, cutting off the iron brace, which is six inches wide and one inch thick, and lodged in some bags of sand placed to protect the steam-drum. This shot was fired from the ram.

6. A shot on the quarter came through the plank timber, iron brace, and ceiling, crossed the wardroom diagonally, striking the mizzen-topsail sheet bitts, cutting it in two, and scattering the splinters all around, destroying the wood work to a very great extent; it then struck the ceiling on the port side, and a hanging knee, and fell on deck.

7. On spar-deck a shot struck in the head, on starboard side, going through the bowsprit, and passing out of the head on port side, shattering the wood-work all around.

8. A shot on port side, abreast the foremast, cutting the rail in two, and passing off without further damage.

9. A shot on starboard side, just abaft fore channels, came through, and disabled gun on port side; striking the breech of the gun, it glanced and struck the axle-tree, and went through the spar-deck and lodged there.

10. A shot on port side, abreast the mizzenmast, and carried away the boat-davits, timber-heads, rail-planks, outside and inside, shattering the wood to a great extent, and damaging the gun on the outside.

11. A shot came through the bows of port quarter-boats, and went

through the hammock-netting on starboard side, carrying away the rail and bulwarks.

12. A shot on the starboard quarter came through and crossed through the deck, diagonally, and went through the rail on port side, tearing away the bulwarks considerably, demolishing the starboard water-closet, and doing other injury.

13. A shot on port quarter, cutting through the plankshear of the poop, cutting off sixteen planks of the deck, and passed underneath and out of the starboard, through the port shutter.

14. A shot struck the kedge anchor, hanging to the port main-brace bump-pin, and broke it off just below the stock, scarifying the side. The mizzen-topsail sheet bitt on the starboard side was struck by a piece of shell, and the brass cover broken.

15. Outside. We were struck by an iron-clad ram, just forward of the mainmast, crushing in three planks, and driving in the links of the chain (which we had hung over the side for the protection of our engine) into the side. The extent of this injury we could not ascertain, but think it is serious.

16. A shot under the transom starboard side cut off three planks, and started a fourth out about four or five feet, and the shot remained there. This is a very serious injury, as much so as any we have received.

All these shots were received in the attack upon the lower forts. In the engagements with the batteries below the city we received the following injuries :

1. A shot on the starboard bow, came through, and lodged in a quantity of rigging stowed in the sick-bay. The extent of injuries we could not ascertain.

2. A shot struck the starboard cathead, shattering it, and injuring the rail forward of it.

Our fore-topsail yard is badly injured.

We are, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

GEO. DEWHURST, *Acting Master U. S. Navy.*

THOMAS PICKERING, *Acting Master.*

W. D. FOY, *Carpenter.*

Captain THOMAS T. CRAVEN,

*commanding U. S. Steam-Sloop Brooklyn, off New Orleans, La.*

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP BROOKLYN, OFF NEW ORLEANS, *April 26, 1862.*

SIR : The following is a report of the losses in the boatswain's department in the actions of April 24th and 25th :

Both mainstays shot away.



One shroud, main rigging, shot away.

One shroud, fore rigging, shot away.

Bowsprit shrouds shot away.

Jig and flying jib-stays shot away.

Catfall and shank pointer on starboard side shot away.

Starboard fore-topsail sheet shot away.

Three coils of cordage destroyed in storeroom. A shot is now lodged in the rigging, barricaded in the sick-bay. No doubt a great deal of the gear is cut, but how much cannot be ascertained until it is broken out.

Main-brace shot away.

Kedge anchor on each quarter shot away, with sixty fathom five-inch hemp hawser, shot away.

Main-brace block shot away.

Three lanyards, mizzen rigging, shot away.

One shroud, mizzen rigging, shot away.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN A. SELMER, *Acting Boatswain U. S. Navy.*

Captain THOMAS T. CRAVEN,

*commanding U. S. Steam-Sloop Brooklyn.*

After such a statement of the condition of a single ship, we wonder that any one could escape on board, or that any vessel floated past the forts.

Thus was fought, and won, the greatest naval battle of the war, which was probably the boldest and most successful effort ever made to match wooden ships against forts at close range, armed with heavy guns, both rifled and smooth-bore, and when, in addition, the forts were assisted by iron-clad rams and a fleet almost as numerous as the one which attacked them. The rebel gunboats, or most of them, were doubtless inferior to our own in strength and power of endurance, but several of them were swift and armed with heavy guns, and it seems, even now, not an unreasonable expectation that with the *Manassas*, and the more formidable *Louisiana*, they would prove an overmatch for our vessels after being shattered by the fire of the forts. In attempting to form a correct opinion of what is due to Admiral Farragut for this victory, and to decide the question whether he exhibited the qualities of a great commander, it must be considered that after weighing all the circumstances, and hearing the opinions of his officers, it rested upon him

alone, as commander-in-chief, to decide whether the attack should be made, and it was for him to determine upon the general plan, and then the time and order of the battle. It must be remembered also, that it was not a blind assault upon defences whose strength was either unknown or underrated. The character of the forts and their armament were well understood, the peril of a night attack in such a river was duly weighed, and the power of the rebel fleet was probably not over-estimated in the calculation of results. Nor must it be forgotten that these defences of the great river were considered to be really impregnable by men skilled in the art of war. This opinion was held most confidently by the rebels themselves. The chief fear of the commander of the forts was, that the severity of his fire might turn the fleet back before he had them fairly in his power; and in New Orleans, the feeling was that of haughty insolence, exulting in the thought of absolute security. And this accounts for the perfect delirium of rage which the rebels showed when our fleet appeared before the city, exhibited alike by the contemptible mock-heroics of the authorities, and the maniac yells and gnashing of teeth of the mob.

In view of all this, Admiral Farragut assumed the responsibility of making what seemed to many a desperate attempt, and succeeded in infusing into others so much of his own confidence and enthusiasm that they expected success. Nor was this attack a blind rush on an enemy, trusting that a sudden dash would in some way bring him success, for nothing was neglected which prudence could suggest, or foresight provide, or skill or science could devise. He studied and measured deliberately the whole strength of his foe, he availed himself of the advice and suggestions of a most able body of coöperating officers, and then arranging all his means so as to bear unitedly upon the ultimate purpose, he gave his orders with a minuteness which showed that he had thought over every detail of the fight. The man who could calmly survey such dangers and obstacles as presented themselves to Farragut at New Orleans, and then, not only conceive a general plan, but arrange and dwell upon the minutest feature, even to buckets of water for his thirsty men, and then go into the fight as he did, with the dash of genuine enthusiasm, certainly deserves the name of

great. It was the culminating act of his life. When he stood calm and triumphant amid the two walls of fire between which lay the glowing deck of the *Hartford*, the flames of the raft surging up to the yard-arms on the one side, and her batteries flashing fire on the other, there was put on his head the crown of a great naval commander, and a few moments after he was past the forts, and the great battle was won.

The plan of the attack proposed two principal measures, first a bombardment of the forts by the mortar-fleet, and then the passage of the fortifications by the squadron. Attempts have been made to compare the efficiency of these two operations; some apparently thinking that the main work was done by the mortar-shells, and others believing that these accomplished little or nothing. Such comparisons tend only to mislead the public mind. The mortar-schooners, under the skilful management of Admiral Porter, accomplished all that even such heavy mortars could do under the circumstances. The steady, long-enduring effort of officers and men, under the peculiar hardships of mortar-firing, deserved, as it received, emphatic praise. The rapidity and accuracy of the fire, considering the position, were wonderful. In view of the number of shells that fell and exploded in and near the works, it seems marvellous that Fort Jackson was not reduced to a heap of rubbish. Indeed, to the casual observer, it appeared to be a ruin only, after the fight. The ground was ploughed up, and pits excavated in every direction; the walls were cracked, casemates were shattered, and almost every combustible thing was consumed; the levee was cut, and water stood in the casemates, and the garrison, doubtless, was somewhat demoralized, but to what extent does not clearly appear. Any one looking at the fort in such a condition after the battle would be likely to describe it as a ruin, and the inference would perhaps be a natural one that little resistance could have been offered to the passage of the ships. But the important fact still remains, that, of the formidable armament of the forts, only a few guns were dismounted, and though surrounded by rubbish, they were as serviceable as ever; and this is very clearly shown by the fact that in their swift passage the ships were struck in their hulls more than a hundred and fifty times; and the one report, already quoted,

tells how severely they were handled. Admitting, therefore, all that is claimed for the admirable practice with the mortars, and receiving as correct the descriptions of the ruined appearance of the works, it is still true that the batteries were mostly in serviceable condition, and the fire of the rebels was rapid, accurate, and severe, interrupted only by the storm of grape and canister, poured in alike by the passing ships, and the small steamers attached to the mortar-fleet. Nothing should be detracted from the fame of Porter because he did not do an impossible thing, and nothing from the renown of Farragut by suggesting that the forts were so far dismantled that their fire could not seriously endanger the fleet. The proper glory of the grand achievement is quite sufficient for all.

It has been frequently said of the battle of New Orleans, or more correctly the battle at the forts, that there the strength, the "back-bone" of the rebellion was broken, and the same opinion, in substance, has been stated in regard to every great battle of the war. During the progress of a conflict on so vast a scale, it is doubtless true that many important crises were reached, great events that brought other decisive ones in their train, but no one battle can be said to have settled the fate of the rebellion. The bloody struggle of Pittsburg Landing rendered the invasion of the Northwest impossible from that quarter, and the fight at Stone River ended all thought of crossing into Ohio; the battle of Gettysburg made it certain that no lodgment could be made in the Northern Atlantic States; the naval battles on the Mississippi secured, perhaps, the ultimate opening of the river; and yet a failure at New Orleans would have been a disaster whose consequences no one can now measure. It seems, as we look back upon it, that it would have greatly prolonged the rebellion. The control of the lower Mississippi would have enabled the rebel Government to draw almost unlimited supplies from the country west of the river; while, at least, the possibility was suggested to the rebel leaders, of withdrawing into Texas as a last resort, and continuing the war upon the almost boundless resources of that great internal empire, in the hope of securing ultimately, by a protracted struggle, recognition and assistance from England and France.

But one of the most important effects of the capture of New

Orleans has not been duly considered. Had the city remained in possession of the rebels a short time longer, they would have completed some very powerful ships that would have driven our squadron out of the river or destroyed it, and they might have completed a navy which would have been a very formidable antagonist of our own. In no feature of our war did the interposition of God more plainly appear, than in the manner in which the rebels were prevented from obtaining a formidable navy. What they actually accomplished is but little known, and the country has not been made fully aware how much it owes to the wise foresight of our own Navy Department and its enterprising and gallant officers for their destruction of a navy which had assumed features and proportions of a very threatening character. It is intended to devote a subsequent chapter to this rebel navy, but a few statements in regard to what was found at New Orleans may be proper here.

There the rebels had either finished, or in process of construction, a fleet of powerful iron-clads, some of which would have been a match for any thing then afloat, except perhaps the Monitor. The *Manassas*, which had once driven our blockading fleet out of the Mississippi, and was again encountered at the forts, was formidable only to wooden ships, and perhaps only in the night to them. But at the forts, as has been stated, three of our best vessels narrowly escaped destruction by her. The steam-battery *Louisiana* was, according to all accounts, a very powerful vessel, more to be feared than the *Merrimack*, and why she performed so little in the great battle is a mystery not yet explained. She was described by those who saw her as a vessel of four thousand tons burden, with four powerful engines, and an armament of sixteen heavy guns, as follows: two 7-inch rifles, three 9-inch shell-guns, four 8-inch shell-guns, seven 100-pounder rifles—in all, sixteen guns. Why such a vessel should remain an almost passive spectator, as has been said by some, of the passage of our squadron, does not yet appear. It has been suggested that her officers were intoxicated from a revel of the earlier part of the night, but, whether this was more than an idle tale, is not known. If, as has been stated, she was more powerful than the *Merrimack*, then no good reason appears why she could not have destroyed our wooden fleet as

easily as the *Merrimack* sank the *Cumberland* and *Congress*, and riddled the *Minnesota*, without injury to herself.

But at the city of New Orleans, nearly completed, was the iron-clad *Mississippi*, a vessel upon which the rebels built more confident expectations than upon any other which they commenced during the war. She was intended for a sea-going vessel, and it was expected that she would have great speed. She was to be heavily armored and heavily armed. Every possible exertion was made to complete her in season to meet Farragut's attack, and she was nearly ready. The rebels fully believed, and apparently with reason, that this iron-clad would not only destroy, or drive out of the river, Farragut's fleet, but that she was able to paralyze our whole wooden Navy, and lay our Atlantic cities under contribution. She was nearly ready for her work, but her machinery not being quite completed she could not be moved, and, instead of going forth triumphantly to destroy, she was met by Farragut floating down the river a burning, helpless wreck. Still another iron-clad battery was sunk opposite the custom-house, and others were being built at Algiers, opposite the city. It is readily seen, then, that had the attack on the forts failed, or even had it been delayed for a few weeks, or perhaps days, the aspect of the war might have been changed.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### OPERATIONS UPON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI SUBSEQUENT TO THE CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS.

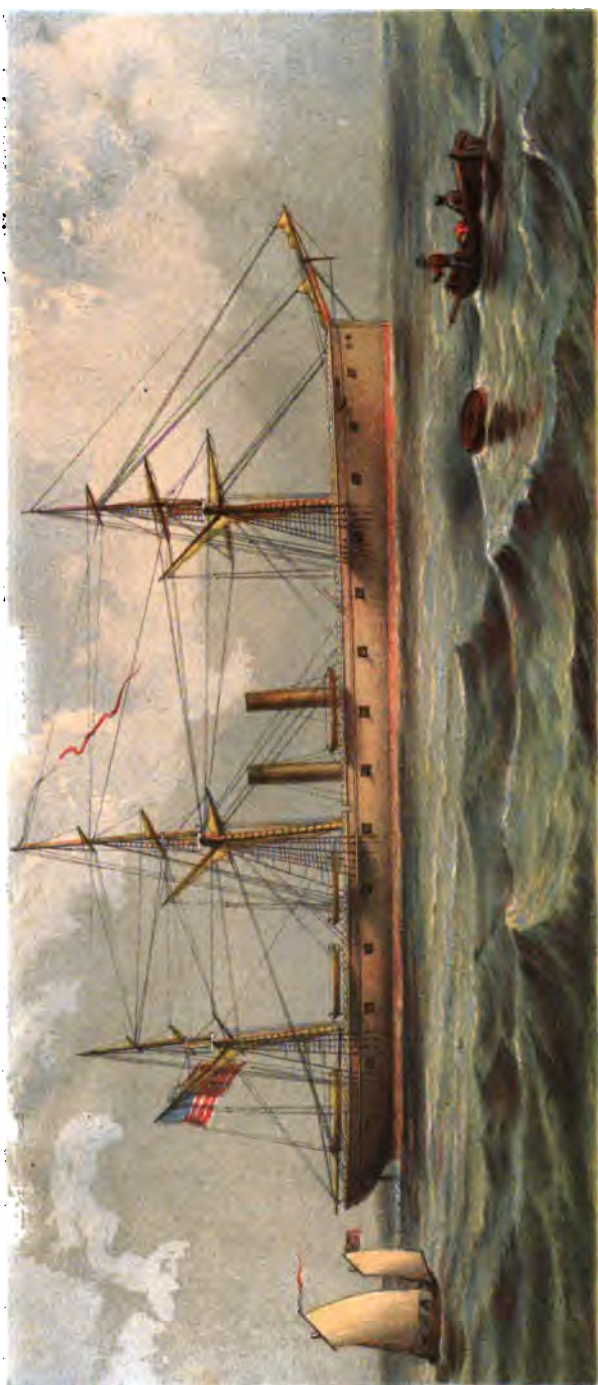
THE heaviest single blow struck by the Navy during the war was the capture of New Orleans, and it was evident that in its consequences it would prove fatal to the rebel cause ; or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, the rebellion could not succeed with New Orleans and the lower Mississippi restored to the control of the Government. The occupation of that city, however, did not give us quiet possession of the river, except from the city to the sea. The whole of the long line from New Orleans to Vicksburg, with the States on either side, was yet in the possession of the rebels, and the whole "Great West" was still shut out from the river and the sea. The rebel blockade of the stream was yet unbroken. Vicksburg was a barrier impassable as to the gunboats from above, and below the rebels had erected batteries at all the available points. The proper base had been gained for operations in the Southwest, one of the great depots and place of construction for the rebel navy had been broken up, and several very dangerous war-vessels had been destroyed.

General Butler had occupied New Orleans with his troops soon after its surrender to Farragut. He held and governed it with a firm hand, curbing effectually the insolence of fallen traitors ; but he had no troops to spare for the occupation of points above. The brilliant success which was crowned by the capture of the Southwestern metropolis raised the expectations of the country beyond the point which circumstances would warrant. It seemed to be assumed that by this battle the Mis-





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*Oregon and Albatross at Sea.*

FIRST PAGES



Mississippi was virtually reopened through its whole extent, that Vicksburg would be immediately taken, and a peaceful commerce be restored to the great central channel of the West. The actual position of affairs was by no means generally understood. In one sense, it is true, our fleet could, and did, control the river. Farragut could pass up and down at his pleasure, and though fired at from every spot where a battery could be planted, he could drive the enemy from his guns and pass on, to be again fired upon in the same manner when he returned. He had no men wherewith to hold these fortified points, and the consequence was that he might spend the season in running the gantlet of batteries from New Orleans to Vicksburg and back, only to find on each return that the rebel works were stronger than when he passed them before, while his ships would, of course, receive some additional damage in every fresh encounter. Whenever his fleet came within range of one of these batteries, which were simply earthworks mounting heavy guns, the rebels inflicted what damage they could; and when the fire from the ships became too severe, the gunners could shelter themselves from the shot, and, when the vessels were gone, the earth forts were soon in as good condition as ever, or additional guns were mounted, so as to make them stronger than before. Thus the rebels might be daily driven out of their defences, and yet would grow daily stronger, and render the river, month after month, more dangerous for our fleet.

It is apparent, therefore, that what the country, elated by the capture of New Orleans, expected of the Mississippi squadron, could by no means be performed without the coöperation of a sufficient land force to occupy the various points where the rebels had erected their works. So far as the Navy could do it, Baton Rouge, Port Hudson, and Vicksburg were all captured more than a year before their final fall. Their batteries were silenced time and again by the fleet, and, had the proper land force been provided, the great "inland sea," as General Sherman called it, would have been opened to a peaceful commerce more than twelve months before it was actually clear. Between the battle of Pittsburg Landing and the time when Vicksburg was invested by Grant, no such support was given by the War Department to the Mississippi squadron as could enable it to hold

possession of any place which it captured on the river. Nor is this stated with the intention of blaming any one. The fact is mentioned only to relieve Farragut and the Navy Department from unmerited censure.

The country was also mistaken in supposing that nothing of importance was accomplished by the Navy on the Mississippi between the capture of the forts below New Orleans and the fall of Vicksburg. The labor performed by the squadron from May, 1862, till July, 1863, told heavily upon the resources of the rebels. The operations of the squadron extended up and down the great river, and all its navigable tributaries and bayous, and then along the coast to Galveston, intercepting supplies, and cutting off, in all directions, the sources from which the rebels drew the support of their armies. The work consisted, it is true, mostly of a series of annoying skirmishes and expeditions, that seemed small in themselves, but, in the aggregate, it cut off far and wide the important channels which supplied the rebel strength. The destruction of salt-works, the intercepting of droves of cattle from Texas, the breaking up of little centres of trade in the secluded bayous, the capture of a small steamer, or of a blockade-runner—these were very little things compared with a great battle, and yet these were often the very causes why a great victory was won, or they provided the means by which the proper fruits of victory could be secured. The Navy Department and the admiral did what was possible under the circumstances, and the aggregate of the labors of the year following the capture of New Orleans is really an important part of the operations of the war.

Early in May the fleet proceeded up the river. The Brooklyn and most of the gunboats steamed past Baton Rouge, without communicating with the shore. On the 7th of May, the Iroquois, Commander J. S. Palmer, was ordered to proceed up the river, anchor abreast of Baton Rouge, and demand the surrender of the city. The correspondence on that occasion adds another to the list of the curious forms which rebel insolence assumed, so characteristic of the temper of the South during the whole war. To be impudent and boastful when all power and hope of resistance were gone, was regarded as a proof of heroic courage. As curiosities deserving a place in history,

the following correspondence is inserted here, remarking only; that, in regard to Vicksburg, the rebel commander, as the event proved, had very excellent reasons for refusing to surrender, for he held the place against all our efforts for more than a year after that; and although Baton Rouge was temporarily occupied, it required much bloody work afterward before we obtained permanent possession.

## No. 1.

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, AT ANCHOR OFF BATON ROUGE, May 8, 1862.

SIR: As there seems to be no hope of a senior officer arriving this afternoon, I shall proceed to carry out the intentions of the flag-officer.

The same terms shall be afforded the city of Baton Rouge as were granted to New Orleans; it must be surrendered to the naval forces of the United States.

The rights and property of its citizens shall be respected; but all property belonging to the so-called Confederate States must remain intact, to be delivered over when demanded.

The flag of the United States must be hoisted on the arsenal.

An answer is expected this evening.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander.*

*His Honor the Mayor of Baton Rouge.*

## No. 2.

MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY OF BATON ROUGE, May 8, 1862.

SIR: Your note of this date has been received, in which you say "the city of Baton Rouge must be surrendered to the naval forces of the United States," and that the same terms will be granted as were to the city of New Orleans.

This note has been submitted to the board of selectmen, and I am instructed to say that the city of Baton Rouge will not be surrendered voluntarily to any power on earth. We have no military force here, and are entirely without any means of defence; its possession by you must be without the consent and against the wish of the peaceable inhabitants.

Further to say, that the city of Baton Rouge has not in possession any property whatever, except such as acquired by the municipal law incorporating it, and exercises no authority over any public property whatever.

Having no control over the arsenal, except for purposes of preserv-

ing the buildings since its evacuation, it cannot be expected that this city would be called on to surrender it, or exercise any act other than such as may be conservative, and not offensive to the sensibilities of the people by hoisting the flag of the United States, as required by you.

Yours, respectfully,

B. F. BRYAN, *Mayor*.

JAMES S. PALMER,

*Commander U. S. Steamer Iroquois, at anchor off Baton Rouge.*

#### No. 3.

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, AT ANCHOR OFF BATON ROUGE, *May 9, 1862.*

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your reply to my note of yesterday's date.

I now inform you that I have taken possession of the arsenal, and hoisted over it the flag of the United States.

War is a sad calamity, and often inflicts severer wounds than those upon the sensibilities. I therefore trust I may be spared from resorting to any of its dire extremities; but I warn you, Mr. Mayor, that this flag must remain unmolested, though I have no force on shore to protect it. The rash act of some individual may cause your city to pay a bitter penalty.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander.*

*His Honor B. F. BRYAN, Mayor of Baton Rouge.*

#### No. 4.

MAYOR'S OFFICE, CITY OF BATON ROUGE, *May 9, 1862.*

SIR: Your note of this date is received, and I agree with you that war is a sad calamity, and it is greatly to be hoped its horrors will not be visited by the intelligent and Christian commander of a hostile fleet upon the *innocent* people and unoffending citizens within the jurisdiction of the town.

In my former note I disclaimed any jurisdiction over the grounds upon which the arsenal is situated, and to preserve order within the limits of this city has always been and will continue to be my duty.

What depredations may be committed without the limits of Baton Rouge the authorities of this city cannot, in fairness, be held responsible, and I cannot conceive why you should make such requirements of the inhabitants.

A moment's reflection must convince you that you have not, in conscience, moral, or by any rule of international or statutory law, any such right. But should you adhere and hold this city responsible for

the acts of men over whom I have no jurisdiction, I ask that before letting loose your dogs of war you give the women and children and peaceable citizens an opportunity of avoiding the sad calamity. If there has been to-day any manifestation to interrupt your proceedings at the barracks, you may be assured that none of the citizens of this city were engaged, and neither will they be.

Yours, respectfully,

B. F. BRYAN, *Mayor.*

JAMES S. PALMER,

*Commander U. S. Steamer Iroquois, off Baton Rouge.*

No. 5.

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF BATON ROUGE, May 10, 1862. }

SIR: On my arrival before your city Captain Palmer laid before me his correspondence with your honor for the surrender of the city, and has thus far acted in accordance with my views.

I have no wish to interfere with your municipal authority, but desire that you will continue to exercise your functions as mayor, and maintain order in the city, and, as the sole representative of any supposed authority, you will suppress every ensign and symbol of government, whether State or Confederate, except that of the United States, whose flag has already been hoisted, by order of Captain Palmer, on the arsenal, and which I expect will be respected by yourself and others, so far as not to permit it to be disturbed.

I understand that you have a foreign corps employed as a police-guard for the maintenance of good order. They will be respected as such, and not interfered with, unless General Butler should deem it necessary to take charge of the city, in which case he or his commandant will issue his own instructions.

Permit me, herewith, to forward you a few of his proclamations.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*His Honor the Mayor of Baton Rouge.*

No. 6.

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF BATON ROUGE, May 10, 1862. }

SIR: I find, upon examination, a quantity of coal at the foundry recently employed by the Confederate government casting shot, etc. This coal I shall require for the use of my vessels, and I shall therefore



take it; but, as a general thing, I desire to trade with the people, and pay for whatever I require.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant, D. G. FARRAGUT.

*Flag-Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*His Honor the Mayor of Baton Rouge.*

No. 7.

MAYOR'S OFFICE, BATON ROUGE, May 10, 1862.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of this morning's date, and in reply have to say that it is my desire and earnest determination to maintain order and quiet in this city, and to that end shall employ all the force at my command. I think I can safely assure you that, so far as the citizens of this place are concerned, no interference upon their part will be made with the flag which you have caused to be hoisted at the arsenal; and, in order that it may not be molested, I have issued my proclamation enjoining all citizens not to interrupt or interfere with it.

The bearer of this, Mr. William Markham, of the firm of Hill & Markham, are the owners of the coal which you inform me you require for the use of your vessels. At my instance, Mr. Markham presents himself in person to make such arrangements for disposing of it as may meet with your expressed wish.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

B. F. BRYAN, Mayor.

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. Flag-Ship Hartford.*

CORRESPONDENCE FOR THE SURRENDER OF NATCHEZ AND  
VICKSBURG.

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, NEAR NATCHEZ, MISS., May 27, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to forward herewith, for the information of the Department, the correspondence which has passed between Commander James S. Palmer, commanding United States gunboat Iroquois, and the authorities of Natchez; also the correspondence between Commander S. P. Lee, commanding United States gunboat Oneida, and the authorities of Vicksburg, in relation to the surrender of those cities to the naval forces under my command.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, AT ANCHOR OFF NATCHEZ, *May 13, 1862.*

SIR: In obedience to your order of the 10th instant, I left Baton Rouge at four in the afternoon of that day and proceeded up the river until I overtook the Oneida and the gunboats, some forty miles below this, who accompanied me into my present position off this city, which I reached at two on the afternoon of yesterday. I addressed to the mayor the accompanying letter (marked 1), which they refused to receive at the landing, and the tone seemed to be that of resolute non-intercourse. This conduct being rather more dignified than wise, I instantly seized the ferry-boat, then on this side, occupied in filling herself with coal, which I intended to secure also, and placing on board of her a force from this squadron of seamen and marines, and a couple of howitzers, under the command of Lieutenant Harmany, of this ship, sent her across to the landing, with orders that if there were not there some of the authorities to receive my communication, he was to land his force, march up to the town, which was about half a mile distant, with colors flying, and there cause the mayor to receive and read my letter. But when the party had reached the landing they found two members of the common council sent, with an apology from the mayor, to receive my communication. They begged that the force should not be landed, as they intended to make no resistance, and seemed disposed to acquiesce in any thing I demanded.

The party then returned, and the following morning I received the enclosed reply (numbered 2), together with the proclamation, which I also enclose.

The city being now virtually surrendered, and by the proclamation of the mayor so announced to its inhabitants, I concluded to send an officer on shore, to which purpose I sent the note marked No. 3.

In an hour or two, being notified, by signal, that the committee, with an escort, was in waiting to receive my officer, I dispatched Lieutenant McNair, of this ship, to ascertain from the mayor whether there were any public buildings from which the rebel flag had hitherto been displayed; if so, it was my intention to hoist there the flag of the United States, which I should require to be guarded and respected by the authorities; also to say that I was as anxious as he was to preserve the peace and quiet of the town; that we were not here to make war upon its peaceable inhabitants, and that I should land no force unless I considered it absolutely necessary. This officer was received most courteously and even kindly by the authorities. The mayor assured him that the flag had never been officially displayed in Natchez; that their government had no buildings or property in the town; but that if I

chose to hoist the flag of the United States, the authorities would do their best to protect it, but hoped they would be spared the responsibility for the possible act of an excited populace. As this city, like Baton Rouge, had never occupied a military position, but was simply a trading town, and as the mayor and authorities had behaved in so sensible and gentlemanlike a manner, I concluded to leave the question of hoisting the flag open until your arrival, and so informed them.

The policy of my forbearance I submit to your better judgment.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding Western Gulf Squadron.*

No. 1.

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, AT ANCHOR OFF NATCHEZ, MISS., May 12, 1862.

SIR: In advance of the squadron now coming up the Mississippi, I am instructed by the flag-officer to demand the surrender of the city of Natchez to the naval forces of the United States.

The same terms will be accorded as were granted to New Orleans and Baton Rouge. The rights and property of all peaceable citizens will be respected; but all property in this city belonging to the so-called Confederate States must be delivered up, and the flag of the United States must wave unmolested and respected over your town.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander.*

*His Honor the Mayor of Natchez.*

No. 2.

MAYOR'S OFFICE, NATCHEZ, MISS., May 13, 1862.

SIR: Your communication of 12th instant has been received by me and laid before the board of selectmen of this city, and I am directed to return the following reply:

Coming as a conqueror, you need not the interposition of the city authorities to possess this place. An unfortified city, an entirely defenceless people, have no alternative but to yield to an irresistible force, or uselessly to imperil innocent blood. Formalities are absurd in the face of such reality. So far as the city authorities can prevent, there will be no opposition to your possession of the city; they cannot, however, guarantee that your flag shall wave unmolested in the sight of an excited people; but such authority as they do possess will be exercised for the preservation of good order in the city. As to property belong-

ing to the Confederate States, they are not aware of any such within the limits of the city.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN HUNTER, *Mayor.*

JAMES S. PALMER,

*Commander U. S. Steamer Iroquois, at anchor off Natchez, Miss.*

#### PROCLAMATION.

The city being in the possession of the forces of the United States, it is earnestly requested that the citizens will preserve good order and commit no acts that might provoke the injury of a defenceless people, and it is hereby enjoined upon them that they abstain from any such acts.

JOHN HUNTER, *Mayor.*

*Mayor's Office, Natchez, Miss., May 13, 1862.*

#### No. 3.

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, OFF NATCHEZ, *May 13, 1862.*

SIR: I shall send an officer on shore to communicate with you. I request that a committee may be at the landing to receive him, at your earliest convenience.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander U. S. Navy.*

*His Honor JOHN HUNTER, Mayor of Natchez.*

U. S. STEAMER ONEIDA, NEAR VICKSBURG, *May 18, 1862.*

*To the Authorities of Vicksburg:*

The undersigned, with orders from Flag-Officer Farragut and Major-General Butler, respectively, demand the surrender of Vicksburg and its defences to the lawful authority of the United States, under which private property and personal rights will be respected.

Respectfully yours,

S. PHILLIPS LEE, *commanding Advanced Naval Division.*

(Also signed by General Williams.)

HEADQUARTERS, VICKSBURG, *May 18, 1862.*

SIR: As your communication of this date is addressed to the "authorities of Vicksburg," and that you may have a *full* reply to the said communication, I have to state that Mississippians don't know, and refuse to learn, how to surrender to an enemy. If Commodore Farragut or Brigadier-General Butler can teach them, let them come and try.

As to the defences of Vicksburg, I respectfully refer you to Briga-

dier-General Smith, commanding forces at and near Vicksburg, whose reply is herewith enclosed.

Respectfully,

JAMES L. ANTRY,

*Military Governor and Colonel commanding Post.*

S. PHILLIPS LEE, U. S. N.,

*commanding Advanced Naval Division, U. S. Steamer Oneida.*

HEADQUARTERS DEFENCES OF VICKSBURG, May 18, 1862.

SIR: Your communication of this date, addressed to the "authorities of Vicksburg," demanding the surrender of the city and its defences, has been received.

Regarding the surrender of the defences, I have to reply that, having been ordered here to hold these defences, it is my intention to do so as long as in my power.

Respectfully,

M. L. SMITH, *Brigadier-General commanding.*

S. PHILLIPS LEE, U. S. N., *commanding Advanced Naval Division.*

MAYOR'S OFFICE, VICKSBURG, MISS., May 18, 1862.

Your communication of this date, addressed "to the authorities of Vicksburg," has been delivered to me.

In reply, I will state to you that, as far as the municipal authorities are concerned, we have erected no defences, and none are within the corporate limits of the city. But, sir, in further reply, I will state that neither the municipal authorities nor the citizens will ever consent to the surrender of the city.

Respectfully, yours,

L. LINDSAY, *Mayor of the City.*

S. PHILLIPS LEE, U. S. N., *commanding Advanced Naval Division.*

U. S. STEAMER ONEIDA, BELOW VICKSBURG, MISS., May 21, 1862.

SIR: It becomes my duty to give you notice to remove the women and children beyond the range of our guns within twenty-four hours, as it will be impossible to attack the defences without injuring or destroying the town, a proceeding which all the authorities of Vicksburg seem determined to require. I had hoped that the same spirit which induced the military authorities to retire from the city of New Orleans, rather than wantonly sacrifice the lives and property of its inhabitants, would have been followed here.

Respectfully yours,

S. PHILLIPS LEE, U. S. N.,

*commanding Advanced Naval Division.*

L. LINDSAY, Esq., *Mayor of the City of Vicksburg.*

MAYOR'S OFFICE, VICKSBURG, MISS., May 21, 1862.

SIR: Your communication of this date was handed to me at a late hour this evening, too late to give public notice to the women and children. In consequence thereof, I shall date your twenty-four hours' time from to-morrow morning, the 22d instant, at eight o'clock A. M.

Respectfully,

L. LINDSAY, Mayor.

S. PHILLIPS LEE, U. S. N.,

*commanding Naval Advanced Division, U. S. Steamer Oneida.*

U. S. STEAMER ONEIDA, BELOW VICKSBURG, May 22, 1862.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of yesterday evening, and in reply have to state that my communication of yesterday, in relation to the removal of the women and children, was for the purpose of placing it at my option *to fire or not*, as I might think proper, at the earliest moment, upon the defences of the town, without producing a loss of innocent life, and to that determination I shall adhere.

Respectfully, yours,

S. PHILLIPS LEE, *commanding Advanced Naval Division.*

L. LINDSAY, Esq., *Mayor of the City of Vicksburg.*

The manner in which the rebels managed their operations on the river, because there was no suitable land force to hold them in check, is well shown by the following occurrence at Grand Gulf, not far below Vicksburg: Admiral Farragut had gone down the river, leaving a part of the fleet above, at and near Vicksburg. The commander of the Iroquois, finding himself short of coal, sent a gunboat as far down as Natchez, for information. Upon the return of this vessel, her commander thought he discovered at Grand Gulf some earthworks partly finished. Commander Palmer, of the Iroquois, thereupon sent down the Wissahickon and Itasca, to examine. They found a formidable battery of rifled guns and some five hundred men ready to dispute the passage. Here, in a short action, these two gunboats were hulled forty-two times. They could inflict very little damage, in return, upon the batteries, for they were located upon the bluff, where they could not be effectually reached by the vessels, while they could pour down a destructive plunging fire, against which the gunboats had no defence. This very well illustrates the dangerous work which the fleet had on hand after the capture of New Orleans. It was a daily repetition

of the battle of the forts on a small scale, and the vessels were receiving almost hourly some new injury. The situation was by no means a pleasant or a promising one.

On the 10th of June, 1862, Commander Palmer, then off Grand Gulf, wrote thus to Admiral Farragut: "I fear we cannot injure the batteries on the hill, and we have no remedy against their plunging shot. I feared to leave a few gunboats only at Vicksburg, as an iron-clad ram was reported ready at Yazoo River, and there was no knowing when some of the rebel gunboats would come down from above; Fort Pillow, we learned, having been partly evacuated, and some heavy guns and a quantity of ammunition having arrived at Vicksburg; besides, the gunboats are all in a most crippled condition. The sick-list has vastly increased." One of the methods which the rebels adopted in this river war was this: They would plant a battery on the river-bank, close by a town; and then, if our commanders refrained from firing, in order to spare the innocent, the rebels of course were shielded. But if the fire was returned, then the charge of barbarous warfare, of murdering women and children, was made against our officers.

The following letter exhibits this device of the enemy:

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT NO. 1, }  
JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI, *June 12, 1862.* }

SIR: I have the honor to enclose copy of a letter received by the mayor of Rodney, notifying him, in substance, that if the vessels of the United States Navy are fired upon by our troops from or near the town, vengeance will be taken upon the women and children, or, as the writer is pleased to term it, "punishment for the offence will be visited upon the town," and this, too, while declaring that "we are not here to war upon unarmed or peaceable persons."

Where two nations are at war, it has been customary among civilized people "to punish the offence" of an attack by the armed forces of one upon those of the other by a combat with the attacking party. If such attack be made from a town, the assaulting party is not entitled to, and, so far as our troops are concerned, does not claim any immunity by reason of the presence of women and children. *What we do claim*, however, and insist upon, is, that when your vessels or transports are fired into by our troops, they shall not hasten to the nearest collection of unarmed and peaceable women and children, and wreak their ven-

geance upon them, as was done lately at Grand Gulf by United States vessels, in retaliation for an attack with which the town had nothing more to do than had the city of St. Louis.

My batteries are located at such points upon the river as are deemed best suited for the desired purposes, and without reference to, or connection with, the people of the town. Should the site happen to fall within a village, you, of course, are at liberty to return the fire. Should it be in the vicinity of one, however, the usages of civilized warfare do not justify its destruction, unless demanded by the necessities of attack or defence.

I cannot bring myself to believe that the barbarous and cowardly policy indicated in the enclosed letter will meet with the approval of any officer of rank or standing in the United States Navy. I have, therefore, thought proper to transmit it to you under a flag of truce, with the confident expectation that you will direct those under your command to confine their offensive operations as far as possible to our troops, and forbid the wanton destruction of defenceless towns, filled with unoffending non-combatants, unless required by imperious military necessity.

The practice of slaying women and children, as an act of retaliation, has, happily, fallen into disuse in this country with the disappearance of the Indian tribes, and I trust it will not be revived by the officers of the United States Navy, but that the demolition and pillage of the unoffending little village of Grand Gulf may be permitted to stand alone and without parallel upon record.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

M. LOVELL, *Major-General commanding.*

*Commanding Officer, U. S. Navy, Mississippi River, near Baton Rouge.*

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, BATON ROUGE, June 17, 1862.

SIR: I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 12th instant, together with its enclosure, in which you are pleased to say that vengeance will be visited upon the women and children of Rodney, if our vessels are fired upon from the town. Although I find no such language contained in the letter of Lieutenant-Commanding Nichols, or even any from which such inference might be drawn, still I shall meet your general remark on your own terms. You say you locate your batteries "at such points on the river as are deemed best suited," etc., without reference to the people of the town, and claim no immunity for your troops. Now, therefore, the violation is with you. You choose your own time and place for the attack upon our defenceless people, and should, therefore, see that the innocent and defenceless of



your own people are out of the way before you make the attack ; for, rest assured, that the fire will be returned, and we will not hold ourselves answerable for the death of the innocent. If we have ever fired upon your "women and children," it was done here at Baton Rouge, when an attempt was made to kill one of our officers, landing in a small boat, manned with four boys. They were, when in the act of landing, mostly wounded by the fire of some thirty or forty horsemen, who chivalrously galloped out of the town, leaving the women and children to bear the brunt of our vengeance. At Grand Gulf, also, our transports were fired upon in passing, which caused the place to be shelled, with what effect I know not ; but I do know, that the fate of a town is at all times in the hands of the military commandant, who may, at pleasure, draw the enemy's fire upon it, and the community is made to suffer for the act of its military.

The only instance I have known where the language of your letter could possibly apply, took place at New Orleans on the day we passed up in front of the city, while it was still in your possession, by your soldiers firing on the crowd. I trust, however, that the time is past when women and children will be subjected by their military men to the horrors of war ; it is enough for them to be subjected to the incidental inconveniences, privations, and sufferings.

If any such things have occurred as the slaying of women and children, or innocent people, I feel well assured that it was caused by the act of your military, and much against the will of our officers ; for, as Lieutenant-Commanding Nichols informs the mayor, we war not against defenceless persons, but against those in open rebellion against our country, and desire to limit our punishment to them, though it may not always be in our power to do so.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

*Major-General MANSFIELD LOVELL,*

*commanding Confederate Troops, Jackson, Miss.*

The same plan was adopted to revenge themselves upon men who were suspected of sympathy with the Union cause. If the plantation of such a one was on the river-bank, they would either plant a field-piece or two near the house, or collect a company of riflemen, and fire upon our transports. Of course our soldiers and sailors took the first opportunity to revenge themselves, and often the house of the innocent Union man

would be burned, and his property all laid waste. In this manner many loyal men were ruined.

The policy of both parties on the great river at that time is easily understood, as is also their relative position. The expedition for opening the Mississippi from above, beginning at Cairo, was originally undertaken by the War Department, and it was thought that no support would be needed from the Navy; that only some transports for conveying troops would be required, and these would form a part of the Army, and therefore under the control of the War Department, at the head of which Mr. Cameron then was. It was soon found that iron-clad gunboats would be needed; but they also for a time received their orders from the Secretary of War. The operations of the little fleet and the army were for a time entirely harmonious. They wrought vigorously together at Forts Henry and Donelson, and Pittsburg Landing; and it was not, perhaps, until General Halleck refused to permit the gunboats to go up and occupy Nashville, which they could easily have done, that there was any appearance of a wish to make the army prominent at the expense of the river navy. When the course of the rebels withdrew our army in the direction of Corinth, and then of Chattanooga, the opening of the Mississippi seemed to be of secondary importance in the eyes of General Halleck, and, as was stated in the first volume, he transferred the army of Pope, numbering some twenty thousand men, from the banks of the Mississippi, after the capture of Island No. 10, to his own position at Corinth, thus leaving Vicksburg untouched—a barrier which, though the gunboats could pass and repass with daily damage to themselves and little to the rebels, they could not remove, because they had no coöperating land force. The fleet in the upper river, after the capture of Memphis, was left to patrol the stream in the face of batteries wherever the rebels could plant one; and the fleet of Farragut was, after the battle of the lower forts, in the same condition below.

When the capture of New Orleans was first proposed by the Navy Department to McClellan, he replied, as was said, that he would first whip Lee, and then he would go down with a hundred thousand men and reoccupy New Orleans; but when he understood that a naval expedition was being fitted out, it

was with difficulty that he would consent that a few troops, which General Butler was then raising in New England, should be permitted to go. But when Mr. Stanton went into the War Department, he warmly encouraged the design; yet even then only men enough could be obtained to hold the forts and the city after they had surrendered to the Navy, while none whatever were provided to occupy the points above, from which the rebels could be driven by the ships. Above and below Vicksburg, the river was open to our fleet; but every day the rebels mounted additional guns along the shores, not only with the intention of rendering the gunboats gradually unserviceable, but with the hope of disabling and capturing some, while they interrupted transports and passenger-boats, and made the most persistent and energetic efforts to keep up the trade with the west side of the river, from whence they derived the supplies for their armies. They wrought constantly, also, in increasing and strengthening their fortifications, hoping completely to close the river.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Government was very anxious that another important blow should be struck on the Mississippi; and it was decided that a naval attack should be made on Vicksburg. Admiral Farragut, in his report, writes that he went back to Vicksburg "in obedience to the orders of the Department and the command of the President." After having once passed the batteries and returned down the river, he apparently had not anticipated this order, and had therefore taken his coal-vessels down with him. It was, he says, only with great difficulty and expense that he was enabled to get his various supplies, including coal, once more up the river; and he writes that he had succeeded only by great exertions on the part of Captain H. W. Morris, aided by the army. It was also seen that no successful attempt could be made upon the batteries on the bluffs at Vicksburg without the assistance of Porter's mortar-fleet, which had done such excellent service at the forts below New Orleans. These schooners had to be towed all the long way to Vicksburg. But by the unremitting exertions of Admiral Porter, aided by all who could render any assistance, sixteen mortar-schooners reached Vicksburg the latter part of June, and arrangements were soon made to bombard the bat-

teries on the heights. Owing to some imperfection in the mortar-fuses, it was two days before the proper range could be obtained. Although he reported to Admiral Farragut that he was ready, and the following general order was at once issued:

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, BELOW VICKSBURG, *June 25, 1862.*

The mortar-boats and gunboats of the mortar-flotilla having been placed by Commander D. D. Porter, according to his judgment, to the best advantage to act upon the batteries on the heights and the fort below the hospital, at 4 A. M. to-morrow they will open fire upon the same and on the city of Vicksburg.

At the display of the signal for the ships and gunboats to weigh, they will form in a double line of sailing, the Richmond, Commander James Alden commanding, leading; the ships Hartford, Commander R. Wainwright commanding, next; Brooklyn, Captain T. T. Craven, third. The gunboats will form another line, so as to fire between the ships, in the following order: Iroquois, Commander James S. Palmer, and Oneida, Commander S. Phillips Lee commanding, ahead, but on the port bow of the Richmond, so as to fire into the forts at the upper end of the town, without interfering with the fire of the Richmond; next in order, the Wissahickon, Commander John De Camp, and the Scioto, Lieutenant-Commanding Ed. Donaldson, in the line with the Iroquois and Oneida, but on the port bow of the flag-ship, so as to fire between the Richmond and flag-ship; next, the Winona, Lieutenant-Commanding Ed. T. Nichols, and Pinola, Lieutenant-Commanding Pierce Crosby, on the port bow of the Brooklyn.

The Hartford will, as often as occasion offers, fire her bow guns on the forts at the upper end of the town; but the broadside batteries of all the ships will be particularly directed to the guns in the forts below and on the heights. The free use of shrapnel is considered the best projectile, but great care must be taken in cutting the fuses, so as always to be sure that they burst short of their destination. When close enough, give them grape. The enclosed diagram will show the position of the respective vessels in the order of attack.

When the vessels reach the bend in the river, the Wissahickon, Scioto, Winona, and Pinola, will continue on; but, should the enemy continue the action, the ships and Iroquois and Oneida will stop their engines and drop down the river again, keeping up their fire until directed otherwise.

D. G. FARRAGUT,

*Flag-Officer, comd'g Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

The Kennebec, Lieutenant-Commanding John Russell, will take position in the rear of, and in a line with, the Pinola, so as to fire astern of the Brooklyn.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Flag-Officer*.

In order to judge of the probabilities of success in the proposed attack, one must consider the situation of Vicksburg. The town is in a sharp bend of the river, and its batteries were so placed as to expose a vessel to a raking fire so soon as it came within range of the rifled guns, then to a direct fire from water-batteries when abreast of the city, and a plunging fire from the guns on the bluffs, and then to a raking fire again until out of range. The batteries were placed, some at the water level, or nearly so, some half way up the bluff, and some on the top of the hill, nearly three hundred feet above the river. There was no sufficient coöperating land force. Under such circumstances, Admiral Farragut proposed to obey his orders to attack the place.

On the night of the 26th of June the mortar-vessels were placed in position, nine on the right-hand side of the river, going up, and eight on the left; the first under the command of Lieutenant Smith, and the other commanded by Lieutenant Queen. The distances of the mortar-schooners from the batteries ranged from one and a half to two miles. On the 27th of June the mortars were engaged in firing upon the batteries and the town, for the purpose of determining accurately the range. On the morning of the 28th of June, propositions had been made to attack according to the foregoing general order. At 2 A. M. the signal was made to weigh anchor, and the whole squadron got under way, and proceeded up the river. At 4 o'clock the great mortars began their dull, heavy roar, that shook the land and water more like a slight earthquake than the discharge of guns, and lines of fire arched over the ships, marking the course of the immense missiles that went crashing into the batteries.

The vessels belonging to the squadron proper were, the flagship Hartford, Commander R. Wainwright; Iroquois, Commander J. S. Palmer; Oneida, Commander S. P. Lee; Richmond, Commander James Alden; Wissahickon, Commander John De Camp; Scioto, Lieutenant Edward Donaldson; Winona, Lieutenant E. T. Nichols; and Pinola, Lieutenant

Pierce Crosby. In addition to these, the Octoroon, the Westfield, the Clifton, the Jackson, the Harriet Lane, and the Owasco, steamers belonging to the mortar-fleet, were brought up by Commander (now Admiral) D. D. Porter. Almost at the same moment when the action was begun by the mortars, the first gun was fired from the rebel batteries; and this being returned by each vessel as it came into position, the battle was soon general, and the rapidity and severity of the fire was scarcely exceeded in the more famous action with the forts below New Orleans. Fourteen steamers and sixteen mortar-schooners were thundering from the river with every variety of gun, from the 13-inch mortar and 11-inch gun, to muskets and rifles; and these were answered by heavy guns nearly on a level with the water, sharpshooters in ambush, and volleys of musketry, by batteries midway up the bluffs, by batteries on the top of the hill, and by field-guns planted in the streets. The ships that passed the batteries were under fire about one hour and a half, and during all the early part of the battle the gunners on both sides had no guide in aiming but the flash of each other's guns. The heavy smoke added to the darkness of the morning; and this, with the fact that the hill batteries in general fired too high, accounts for the comparatively small damage which the ships received. And yet this injury, as will be seen, was in the aggregate by no means small. It was evident that a few months of such service would cripple or seriously injure every ship of the fleet.

One portion of the squadron passed the batteries gallantly, and anchored above the town. The Brooklyn, the Kennebec, and the Katahdin did not pass the batteries. After being under fire more than two hours, as was reported, finding that the batteries ahead of them had not been silenced by the vessels which had gone up, their commanders concluded that they should obey the spirit, if not the letter of the admiral's order, by dropping down the river out of range. The forts had been successfully passed, that was all. No ultimate object had been gained, like that of occupying New Orleans after the action below, nor were there, as then, any means of compelling the surrender of the enemy's works.

The forts and batteries at Vicksburg were as strong and

dangerous as before ; and in fact they were made stronger after each attack. As some of the officers of the fleet intimated, it simply proved that a fleet of wooden ships *could* pass formidable land-batteries without being sunk ; and had they continued to pass and repass daily those Vicksburg fortifications, until every ship had been torn into splinters by shot and shell, nothing would have been gained, as matters then were, except to show how gallantly our sailors could fight. Admiral Farragut did all that could be done—he passed and repassed the batteries.

In order that the reader may see more clearly the character and results of such a battle with land-batteries, the following brief extracts from official reports are presented. They give glimpses of what was passing on board the different ships, the damages which the vessels received, and the number of the killed and wounded :

#### THE HARTFORD.

I passed up at the slowest speed (we had but eight pounds of steam), and even stopped once, in order that the Brooklyn and sternmost vessels might close up. The Hartford received but very little injury from the batteries in or below the town, but several raking shots from the battery above the town did us considerable damage : they were 50-pounder rifle and 8-inch solid shot. The first passed through the shell-room in the starboard forward passage, and lodged in the hold, but did no other harm. The 8-inch struck the break of the poop and passed through the cabin, but hurt no one ; the rigging was much cut, and the port main-topsail yard was cut in two.

If the ships had kept in closer order, in all probability they would have suffered less, as the fire of the whole fleet would have kept the enemy from his guns a longer space of time, and, when at his guns, his fire would have been more distracted.

When we reached the upper battery we soon silenced it, and it was reported to me that its flag was struck. We therefore gave three cheers ; but when we had passed about three-quarters of a mile above they reopened fire with two heavy guns. I was unable to reply to this raking fire, being out of range. Although their shots were well directed, they either had too much or too little elevation, and only cut our rigging to pieces, without injuring any one seriously, which was strange, as the Iroquois, Winona, and Pinola were on our quarter. . . .

The Department will perceive from this (my) report, that the forts

can be *passed*, and *we have done it*, and can *do it again as often as may be required* of us. It will not, however, be an easy matter for us to do more than silence the batteries for a time, as long as the enemy has a large force behind the hills to prevent our landing and holding the place.

General Williams has with him about three thousand men, and, on the occasion of our attack and passing, placed a battery of artillery nearly opposite the upper forts, for the purpose of distracting the raking fire from us while running up; but the fort, having a plunging fire upon them, dismounted one of the guns, and killed a man and a horse.

## DAMAGES.

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, ABOVE VICKSBURG, *June 29, 1862.*

SIR: In obedience to your order of the 29th instant, I respectfully submit the following report of damages received in action of the 28th instant:

One shot through cut-water (68-pounder); one on water-line, abaft of foremast, and through shell-room (68-pounder); one under fore-chains, above air-port, carrying away upper clamp and hanging-knee (80-pounder, rifle); one through starboard hammock-netting, abreast of mainmast (32-pounder); one through starboard battery, abreast of foremast (68-pounder); one through poop-cabin, starboard side, carrying away forward beam and two hanging-knees, bulkhead, etc. Main topsail-yard shot away; barge's keel shot away; gig damaged.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES H. CONLEY, *Carpenter, U. S. Navy.*

*Captain R. WAINWRIGHT, commanding U. S. Flag-Ship Hartford.*

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, ABOVE VICKSBURG, *June 29, 1862.*

SIR: In obedience to your order of the 29th instant, I respectfully submit the following report of damages done rigging in the action of the 28th instant:

Five starboard mizzen shrouds cut away. One mizzen topmast backstay, two main topmast backstays starboard, two starboard main shrouds, two fore-topmast backstays, one port fore shroud, two starboard fore shrouds, one bowsprit shroud, and some running rigging also cut away.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES WALKER, *Boatswain, U. S. Navy.*

*Captain RICHARD WAINWRIGHT, commanding U. S. Steamer Hartford.*



## THE ONEIDA.

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP ONEIDA, ABOVE VICKSBURG, *June 28, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to report the part borne by the Oneida in the engagement with the rebel batteries at Vicksburg this morning:

At 2.10 A. M. the flag-ship made private signal to the fleet to get under way. Stopped coaling, cast off from the coal-bark, called all hands and got under way, lashed the hammocks alongside the starboard side to hold splinters, beat to quarters and cleared ship for action, and stood up the river, the Iroquois in line ahead, the Richmond astern of us, and the rest of the fleet following. At 3.55 the enemy opened fire on us from his numerous batteries below, over, and above the town. At 4.15 opened on the enemy's batteries in succession, firing for fifteen minutes or more at the flash or smoke of the batteries below and over the town, viz., the marine hospital battery and the batteries on the ridge over that hospital, it being too dark to see distinctly the batteries on the shady side of the hills. As it grew light, orders were given to fire as soon as the smoke cleared off, and with good aim. We used shells (5' fuses), shrapnel, and grape, according to distance, steaming so as to keep between the Iroquois and Richmond, and going ahead at intervals when the enemy got our range well.

Having reached the bend in the river (the Iroquois ahead and the Richmond astern of us), and none of our starboard guns now bearing on the batteries, pivoted guns and lashed hammocks on the port side, and prepared for enfilading the batteries above the town, when the flag-ship came up in the proposed line of fire. At 6.30 the Oneida anchored near the Hartford.

This ship was struck four times. One 6-inch rifle shell came through the starboard after-pivot port, killing S. H. Randall, seaman, at the after-pivot gun, severely wounding Richard Hodgson, third assistant engineer, at the engine-bell, and, passing through the combings of the engine-room hatch, picked up three loaded muskets (each lying flat on the deck, on the port side of that hatch), and burst in the bulwarks, over the first cutter, which was lowered to near the water's edge, drove the muskets through the open port there, and severely wounded William Cowell, seaman, who was in the boat sounding, and slightly wounding Henry Clark, chief boatswain's mate. One 8-inch solid shot struck on our starboard quarter, near the copper, and cut the mizzenmast half in two between decks. One 32-pounder shot passed through the rail. A second 8-inch solid shot carried away, amidships, the keel of the launch (which was partly lowered), and, entering on the starboard side, struck the steam-drum, and, glancing, fell into the fire-room.

We expended nineteen 11-inch shells, 5" fuses; sixteen 11-inch shrapnel; three 11-inch grape, from the two pivot-guns; twelve 6-inch shells; six 32-pounder grape, from the two thirty-twos; and twenty-eight 30-pounder bolts, from two rifle guns—most of these from the fore-castle pivot-gun.

The officers and men did their duty well. The enemy's fire was heavy. I enclose the surgeon's report. We have no carpenter.

Respectfully yours, S. PHILLIPS LEE, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

#### THE RICHMOND—DAMAGES.

U. S. SHIP RICHMOND, *June 28, 1862.*

SIR: I respectfully beg leave to report the damage received by this vessel in the action off Vicksburg this day. She was struck by an 8-inch shot between Nos. 4 and 5 gun-ports, cutting through chain-plate and plank-shear, tearing up seven planks of spar-deck, cutting through fore-and-aft knee, destroying carline, breaking diagonal knee, shattering beam, and imbedding itself therein; also, by an 8-inch shot forward of No. 6 gun-port, cutting through plank-shear and one plank of deck, shattering the adjoining plank, passing over, grazing boat's davit. Between Nos. 13 and 14 gun-ports, by an 8-inch shell entering just below the mizzen-channels, passing through bulwark, cutting off two timbers, tearing badly three streaks of ceiling, striking trunnion of gun, and, bounding, broke two boarding-pikes at mizzenmast. We were struck, also, by a shot, on the cheek of the foremast and trestle-tree, cutting off the head of forestaysail mast.

Sir, I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

HIRAM L. DIXON, *Carpenter.*

*Commander JAMES ALDEN, commanding U. S. Ship Richmond.*

#### THE WISSAHICKON.

U. S. GUNBOAT WISSAHICKON, *OFF THE YAZOO RIVER, June 29, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of our engagement with the rebel batteries on the heights of Vicksburg. Yesterday morning, at about 2 o'clock, observing the signal from the flag-ship for the fleet to weigh anchor and proceed to the attack, as arranged by general order, we were soon under way and steaming slowly up the river. By 4 o'clock we were in our station, astern of the Iroquois, and on the port-quarter of the Richmond, the Oneida ahead and close to us, the remainder of the vessels of the squadron not in sight.

At 4.15 the batteries opened a heavy fire upon us, which we immediately returned with our Parrott rifle and 11-inch gun. Arriving opposite the city, and within four hundred yards of the lower batteries, our two 24-pounder howitzers, charged with shrapnel, were brought into operation and did good service in clearing the batteries of their crews. The action continued for one hour, during which the Wissahickon received four shots. Our port main rigging was shot away, and an 8-inch shell struck the vessel at the water-line, entering the berth-deck, where it killed one man and wounded all the men stationed to pass shot and powder on that deck. Our loss in the battle, though not heavy, is still severe. Master's Mate Charles M. Bird received a compound fracture of the left arm; ward-room cook killed, and five of the crew wounded. A severe attack of fever had confined me to bed for several days previous to the action, and I could do but little during its continuance except to encourage, by my presence on deck, the crew to do their duty faithfully.

To Lieutenant E. E. Potter, the executive officer, belongs the credit of our success, and it affords me pleasure to inform you that the officers and crew of the Wissahickon did their duty faithfully, and to my entire satisfaction.

After passing the batteries, I proceeded, according to my orders, to the mouth of the Yazoo River, but the gunboats named in your order, which were to join me, not having come up, I deemed it imprudent to attempt the ascent of the river alone. I shall, therefore, await your further orders. I am, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN DECAMP, *commanding.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. N.,  
commanding W. Gulf Squadron, near Vicksburg, Miss.*

#### THE CLIFTON.

U. S. STEAMER CLIFTON, TWO MILES BELOW VICKSBURG, *June 28, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that this morning, at 3.45 A. M., in obedience to orders, we got under way and proceeded in our station, just astern of the Westfield, in the line headed by your own ship, to engage the batteries on the heights around Vicksburg. When within range we opened our fire on the upper batteries on the hill from our rifled gun and forward 9-inch, and forward 32-pounder, using 15-second shell. On receiving your orders, we directed our fire at the battery known as the "water-battery," advancing to within about twelve hundred yards, where we kept our station, using shrapnel from the 9-inch guns. At times, as opportunity offered, we used our after 9-inch guns. This we

continued for some half to three-quarters of an hour, with, I think, good effect, until we were hailed by the Jackson, asking our assistance to tow them out of the fire, that ship being temporarily disabled.

While in the act of taking her line, we received a shot under the guard, just forward of the wheel, which, going through the ship's side, made its way into the end of the starboard boiler, and, partially coming out on the other side, caused such a rush of steam as to blow off, at once, the cover to the forward hatch, filling the forward berth-deck (under which is the forward magazine) with steam, and killing, instantly, Thomas Collins, gunner's mate; Robert Sargent, ship's cook; William Morris, captain's cook; John Burke, ordinary seaman; John B. Carter, landsman; and Peter Hall, landsman, of the forward powder division; and severely scalding George B. Derwent (colored), wardroom steward, who died a few hours afterward of the effects of his injuries, and John Hudson, master-at-arms, who is doing well; his wounds, though severe, not being thought dangerous. But one man from this division escaped, he being at the head of the ladder at the time. Some eight men from the forward pivot-gun jumped overboard to escape the steam. With the aid of the Jackson's boats we were fortunate enough to recover all these except John Conner, second-class fireman, who was drowned. This shot, which proved to be a 50-pound rifle-shot, prevented any further movement of our wheels for the time. We, however, continued our fire from the forward and after 32's, and after 9-inch guns, until you noticed our mishap and came alongside to tow us out of action. At this period the signal to retire was given. . . .

I have the honor to be, respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. H. BALDWIN, *Acting Lieutenant commanding.*

*Commander D. D. PORTER, commanding Bomb Flotilla.*

#### THE BROOKLYN.

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP BROOKLYN, BELOW VICKSBURG, June 30, 1862.

SIR: In compliance with your order of yesterday's date, to make my official report of my attack on Vicksburg, on the 28th instant, and to give my reason for not following the flag-ship up the river, etc., I submit the following:

At 3.15 A. M., June 28th, got under way, took position in the prescribed line of battle, and followed the flag-ship; at 4.05 A. M. the enemy opened fire upon the advanced vessels. When this ship arrived abreast of the lower batteries, the steamers of the mortar-flotilla, which seemed to be without any form of order, obstructed our passage in such a manner as to oblige us to stop our engines, and thus delayed our

progress. At 4.45 A. M., as the 80-pounder rifle was the only gun bearing upon the hill, and able to reach, we opened with that vigorously, keeping well inside their line of fire. At 5.15, the gunboats, and, a few minutes after, the bomb-vessels of the mortar-flotilla, having ceased firing, all the batteries which had previously been partially silenced, immediately renewed the action, hailing a cross-fire on this ship and the two gunboats. At this time the smoke cleared away ahead of us, and, to my surprise, I could see nothing of the flag or other ships in the line. Whilst we were hotly engaged, trying with our two rifles to silence their most annoying battery, fire was opened upon us by a battery of five pieces of flying artillery, from a position about two-thirds of the way down the hill, and in front of the southernmost battery. Being within easy range, we opened our starboard broadside with shell and shrapnel and drove them from their position. Finding myself entirely unsupported, except by the Kennebec and Katahdin, which two vessels gallantly performed their part in the engagement, and knowing that it was impossible to reduce a single one of those hill-top batteries, at 7.25 A. M., after sustaining their fire for two hours and forty minutes, I discontinued the action, and at 8.25 A. M. came to anchor about two and a half miles below Vicksburg.

My reasons for not following the flag-ship up the river, that is, *above* and *beyond* the fire of the forts, are simply because, in your general order of the 25th instant, you say, "Should the action be continued by the enemy, the ships and the Iroquois and Oneida will stop their engines and drop down the river again;" and, on the evening of the 27th, twice (when in the cabin and on the quarter-deck of your flag-ship) I asked you if it was your wish or desire for me to leave any batteries behind me that had not been silenced, you answered, "No, sir; not on any account!"

It affords me great pleasure to bear witness to the excellent deportment of my officers and men; a more cool, or braver set of men, was never on board of any vessel.

We were hulled but twice, one shot taking effect below water, on our starboard bow, and we received some damage to our rigging. We have no casualties on board. We expended, in the action, twenty-eight 9-inch shell, forty-one 9-inch shrapnel, sixty-two Hotchkiss 80-pound rifle shell, three Dahlgren 80-pound rifle shell, fourteen Parrott 30-pound rifle shell. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. T. CRAVEN, *Captain.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*commanding Western Gulf Blockading Squadron,*

*U. S. Ship Hartford, above Vicksburg.*

## STEAMERS ATTACHED TO THE MORTAR-FLEET.

*Extract from Commander D. D. Porter's Report.*

Not a shot had, up to this time, struck one of the mortar-steamers; when, finding it necessary to slow the engines, to get out of the line of the Brooklyn's fire, the vessel became stationary, and a fair target for what guns the enemy were able to fire. The Jackson, Lieutenant-Commanding Woodworth, was struck badly with rifle shells, one of which exploded in her wheel-house, disabling the man at the wheel by cutting off his leg, and knocking her steering apparatus to pieces, which disabled her. The other struck the pillar-block support, almost cutting it in two. This steamer being disabled, the Clifton, Lieutenant-Commanding Baldwin, went to her assistance (by signal), and, while in the act of taking her in tow, a 7-inch shot passed in on the Clifton's port bow, going through her boiler. By this catastrophe, six of the men in and about the magazine were scalded to death, and others were scalded severely. The steam drove eight or ten men overboard, one of whom was drowned. The Jackson, Lieutenant-Commanding Woodworth, now became the helping ship, and picked up out of the water the Clifton's men, that steamer being completely disabled. The Westfield, on approaching to assist her, was struck on the frame of her engine by a heavy rifle shot, which, fortunately, did not go through, having struck butt-end foremost, and, consequently, caused but short delay. In the mean time, the Octorora dropped out of fire, took the Clifton in tow, and removed her to a place of safety. The Jackson drifted out clear. No further necessity existing for the flotilla steamers remaining under fire (the Brooklyn and those astern of her having slowed their engines, and proceeding no further), the signal was made to retire under cover of the woods, having been sixty-five minutes under fire. Although the steamers disabled were in a strong current, and narrow, crowded river, they were handled and taken out of action without confusion of any kind, beyond that occasioned by the escaping steam on board the Clifton. Such a calamity is always appalling to those unused to the effects of such a terrible enemy on board their own vessel. The conduct of the officers and men on board the Clifton was creditable in the highest degree, and I regret to say that those scalded to death were some of the leading men of the vessel.

No further casualties occurred of any consequence. The Jackson and Clifton are temporarily repaired, the latter working under one boiler. All the steamers took good positions, and their commanders did their duty properly. It is to be regretted that a combined attack

of Army and Navy had not been made, by which something more substantial might have been accomplished. Such an attack, I think, would have resulted in the capture of the city. Ships and mortar-vessels can keep full possession of the river, and places near the water's edge, but they cannot crawl up hills three hundred feet high, and it is that part of Vicksburg which must be taken by the army. If it was intended merely to pass the batteries at Vicksburg, and make a junction with the fleet of Flag-Officer Davis, the Navy did it most gallantly and fearlessly. It was as handsome a thing as has been done during the war; for the batteries to be passed extended full three miles, with a three-knot current, against ships that could not make eight knots under the most favorable circumstances. Again, sir, I have to mention favorably the divisional officers, and the acting masters commanding mortar-vessels. Anchored, at all times, in a position selected by myself, more with regard to the object to be accomplished than to any one's comfort or safety—knowing that they will have to stay there without a chance of getting away till I think proper to remove them (no matter how thick the shot and shell may fly)—there has always existed a rivalry as to who shall have the post of honor (the leading vessel) almost certain to be struck, if not destroyed.

#### THE PINOLA.

U. S. GUNBOAT PINOLA, ABOVE VICKSBURG, *June 30, 1862.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that I took my position in line of battle on the 28th instant at 3.10 A. M., in obedience to signals, and stood up the river in company with the squadron. At 4 A. M. opened fire on the enemy's batteries, which we continued until 6.10 A. M., when we had passed Vicksburg, and were beyond the range of our stern guns (24-pound howitzers), but within range of the enemy's heavy rifled guns for some twenty minutes after we had ceased firing. At 6.40 A. M. anchored above Vicksburg; fired from the 11-inch gun twenty shell, three grape, and one shrapnel; from the Parrott rifle, twenty-nine shell; from the howitzers, thirteen shell and twenty shrapnel—total eighty-six. Owing to the smoke and remarkably scattered position of the enemy's guns, we labored under great disadvantage in aiming, which hindered us from firing more rapidly. The fire from the enemy upon us was severe, owing, in a great measure, I think, to our being the last vessel that passed their batteries. But, I am thankful to say, only a few shot struck us, one of which, a heavy shot, struck John Brown, ordinary seaman, at the 11-inch gun, seriously wounding him; another, a 50-pound rifle-shot, cut away the timber-head of the star-

board after-port, struck the howitzer and carriage, slightly defacing the former, and slightly injuring the latter; it also struck the cabin-hatch, destroying the barometer and thermometer, and landed in the port water-ways; and, I regret to say, it killed William H. Thomas, quarter-gunner and captain of the gun, while sighting the piece, and mortally wounded Thomas Graham, landsman, who died in a few minutes after; it also slightly wounded William H. Shucks, landsman. Daniel Collier, landsman, was wounded by a musket-ball, volleys of which were fired at us from hills and bushes. We received some four or five large grape-shot in the hull just below the water-ways. I am happy to say that neither the vessel nor guns were disabled. The howitzer continued firing after the accident, under the direction of Acting-Master's Mate William H. Thompson, who, by his brave example, restored confidence to his crew, and did great service in the action. . . .

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

PIERCE CROSBY, *Lieutenant commanding.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, U. S. N.,  
commanding Western Division of U. S. Blockading Squadron,  
Gulf of Mexico.*

In this battle there were seventeen killed and thirty wounded. These statements, embracing only a part of the fleet, enable one to form a more correct idea of the effects of a fight than what might be considered a *brilliant* general description; and they most conclusively show that no important result could possibly be reached. The ships were severely cut up, the squadron was divided, a part above and the other portion below the batteries, and the same gantlet was to be run again with about the same result; yet Admiral Farragut and his men did all that could be done.

As the mortar-schooners were moored along the edge of a thick wood, the rebels made several attempts to surprise and burn them. But a portion of this wood was a morass, and upon this and his own vigilance Porter depended for safety. He kept a line of patrols about a hundred yards from the river, to prevent any secret approach. On the 1st of July, the rebels, as they themselves reported, sent two regiments into these swamps to make an attack on the flotilla. The guns and mortars were kept in readiness for such an attempt; and as soon as the pickets were driven in, fifty guns and mortars opened almost at the same



moment, throwing into the woods and swamp, grape, shrapnel, canister, shells, and round shot. The rebels, confounded by the sudden shower that hissed, screamed, and thundered through the thicket, fell into disorder, and, floundering in the mud, hurried away, leaving guns, knapsacks, and cartridge-boxes behind, and some men sticking fast in the morass.

Admiral Porter, fertile in expedients, then landed five howitzers, and hung a large bell in the woods, with lines leading from it in various directions, so that pickets could easily give the alarm. On the 2d of July, the rebels made another attack; but this time they were unexpectedly met by the fire of the howitzers. Several dead bodies and some abandoned arms were found in the swamp after this skirmish. After this, they were unremitting in their attentions to the mortar-flotilla, firing rifle shot and shells, sometimes striking the vessels, but were not able to drive them from their position.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BATTLE WITH THE RAM ARKANSAS.

On the 15th of July, 1862, there was a brief naval battle on the Mississippi, just above Vicksburg, which showed, almost as clearly as the work of the Merrimack, the immense superiority of iron-clads over any description of wooden ships, or those protected by light armor only, as some of our Mississippi gunboats were.

For some time it had been known to our officers on the Mississippi, that the rebels were constructing a formidable iron-clad at some point up the Yazoo River, with which they threatened to annihilate our squadron on the Western waters. Repeated examinations had shown that a raft had been placed across the Yazoo, about eighty miles from its mouth, defended by a battery below; while above the raft lay the new iron-clad ram Arkansas, heavily plated, and mounting a formidable battery. These preparations of the rebels occasioned some anxiety to our officers, but no movement was made to interrupt them until too late. Even then, as the event proved, they were not fully aware of the character of their new enemy.

It was at length determined to send an expedition up the Yazoo to reconnoitre. It was composed of the Carondelet, one of the Western iron-clads, mounting 9-inch and 8-inch guns, and a 100-pounder rifle; the wooden gunboat Tyler; and the ram Queen of the West, unarmed, except that she had on board some sharpshooters from General Williams's army.

These vessels had proceeded but a short distance up the Yazoo when they encountered the Arkansas, coming rapidly down. She was in appearance much like the Merrimack, and, carrying

8-inch rifles, she was quite as formidable a vessel. Our gun-boats at once retreated down the narrow stream, firing as they went. Their shot produced no apparent effect upon the ram; but the projectiles from her heavy rifles crashed through their weaker sides, shattering their frames, and slaughtering their men, and they were nearly disabled when they reached the Mississippi and the shelter of our fleet.

The firing had been heard by the combined squadrons of Farragut and Davis, as they lay at anchor above Vicksburg; but it seems not to have occurred to any one that the ram might be coming down; and when the Carondelet and Tyler were seen coming out of the Yazoo, severely injured, and the Arkansas in chase, not a vessel in the fleet was under steam.

The only course by which the rebel boat could reach Vicksburg lay right through the fleets of Davis and Farragut, and yet she went straight on, receiving their fire at point-blank range from 9-inch and 10-inch guns, and delivering hers from her broadside and bow guns as she passed, which told with terrible effect upon the wooden ships. In a few minutes she had passed through the squadron, and was safely anchored under the guns of the Vicksburg batteries. Her appearance was so sudden, our officers were so conscious of having been caught unprepared, and the success of her bold manœuvre was so complete, that for a time the prevailing feeling was simple astonishment. The few minutes in which the *Arkansas* was engaged were quite enough to show that she was a terrible adversary—as the result of the brief battle was, in Commodore Davis's squadron, killed, thirteen; wounded and missing, forty-four—in all fifty-seven, killed, wounded, and missing. In Admiral Farragut's fleet, including the action of the evening, there were killed, five; wounded, sixteen; making in all, killed, wounded, and missing, seventy-eight. Turning to the report of the fleet-surgeon, of the casualties at the great battle with the forts below New Orleans, it is found that there were killed thirty-six, and wounded one hundred and thirty-five. In the brief battle with the ram there were half as many killed as at the forts, and the ratio of the wounded and missing was sixty to one hundred and thirty-five.

It was thought by some that the *Arkansas* was seriously

injured, but her progress was not arrested, nor was she prevented from going down the river. Exactly what her injuries were, will probably never be known. Somewhat excited perhaps by the bold and successful passage of this rebel iron-clad, it was resolved by the commanding officers to take immediate measures to destroy her; and certainly there was no lack of courage in the methods adopted.

It was agreed that as soon as darkness should cover the movement, a part of the gunboat fleet should drop down and engage the upper batteries, while Admiral Farragut should pass down with his fleet, attack the lower forts and batteries, and endeavor to destroy the ram where she lay at the levee. The plan was acted upon. As evening drew on, the Benton, the Cincinnati, and the Louisville moved down within range of the upper batteries, and began the action, while Farragut's vessels also got under way. It was dark before his vessels came abreast of the town, and then it was impossible to discover the exact position of the Arkansas, lying as she did under the shadow of the bank; and the ships passed down without doing her any damage, they going through with the usual running fight with the batteries, both parties firing in the darkness at the flashes of the guns. When the fight was over, Vicksburg was as strong and defiant as ever, and the ram lay safe at her moorings. Of course, no other result was even possible. It showed, what had been so often uselessly proved before, that the works of the rebels *could* be passed; but to expose repeatedly wooden ships, at short range, to earthworks on hill-sides and hill-tops, was to insure their ultimate if not speedy destruction. Yet the country expected to hear, under such circumstances, of the capture of Vicksburg, and impatience was manifested at the delay. The following brief extracts present a few interesting details of this night action:

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP ONEIDA, BELOW VICKSBURG, *July 16, 1862.*

SIR: I make the following report of the action with the batteries, and with the rebel iron-clad ram Arkansas, last evening, in passing Vicksburg:

At 6.40 P. M. flag-ship made general signal 1,218; got under way, steaming as necessary, whilst the fleet was formed according to the

plan for the morning of the 28th ultimo. Renshaw's mortars were now firing at the batteries. At 6.55 the army mortars commenced firing; at 7 the Benton opened fire on the new upper battery; at 7.20 passed two of the army gunboats—now holding their fire to allow us to pass—our fleet having formed and closed up; at 7.30 we opened fire on the new upper battery; fired, in passing, at the upper batteries and rifle-pits with our battery and small-arms, whilst under like fire from the rebels.

We passed near the left (east) bank, stopped the engine, and drifted by the town; saw the wharf-boat; fired bolts from two rifled guns, and solid shot from the two 11-inch pivot-guns, at the Arkansas, which, lying under the bank, exposed her position by firing. Stopped firing at 7.50, having expended the following projectiles: six shells, 11-inch, 5' fuse; nine grape, 11-inch; two solid shot, 11-inch (at the ram); ten shells, 32-pounders, 5' fuse; one stand 32-pounder grape; two solid 32-pounder shot; sixteen bolts and one shell from the 30-pounder Dahlgren rifle-guns. No casualties occurred on board. The officers and men on the sick-list who were able to go to their guns did so. Anchored with the fleet.

Respectfully yours,

S. PHILLIPS LEE, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding, etc., etc.*

The following is from Commander Wainwright, of the Hartford:

At 6.45 P. M. we got under way and stood down the river, when the upper battery opened. We returned their fire as soon as our guns would bear, and continued firing without intermission at batteries, ram, and riflemen, until we anchored below the town. The officers and men behaved with their accustomed bravery and coolness. The two (officers) acting masters of the powder-division were sick, but, under the direction of Paymaster G. F. Plunket and Sailmaker John A. Holbrook, its duties were admirably carried on. The efficiency of the gun-divisions are, in a great measure, due to the drill of Acting-Midshipmen J. H. Reed, E. C. Hazeltine, and H. L. Blake. We were struck in the hull several times, and a 9-inch shell, that did not explode, carried away our starboard foretopsail sheet and bitts on berth-deck. The rigging was but slightly injured.

Commander Palmer, of the Iroquois, gives this account:

U. S. STEAMER IROQUOIS, BELOW VICKSBURG, July 17, 1862.

SIR: At twenty minutes after six in the afternoon of the 15th, signal being made from the flag-ship to weigh and form the line ahead

(the Iroquois being ordered to lead), I was immediately under way, and stood down the river toward the newly-erected battery, having been preceded about half an hour by Flag-Officer Davis and the Benton, with two other iron-clad gunboats, whose instructions were to keep in play the upper battery, whilst we passed on to the attack.

At 7 we passed the head of their line, and were immediately under fire, which we returned at once; and, very soon after, the hill battery, in the upper part of the town, commenced its raking fire, the shot and shell flying over us, their guns not being sufficiently depressed. In a short time we were abreast of the town, from which we received volleys of musketry and artillery, which we returned with shrapnel and grape. Now the lower hill-batteries commenced their plunging fire, and at this critical moment our worn-out engines suddenly stopped, and we drifted for twenty minutes under fire, which, as night was now setting in, was ill-directed, and very soon gave me no concern.

As we dropped down, the lower water-battery, and what I supposed might be the iron-clad ram, opened upon us. This we returned with solid shot. But, with all this fire of heavy shot and shell from the batteries, of musketry and field-pieces, with which the town was crowded, with the exception of a 6-pound shell, fired from a field-piece, left sticking in our side between wind and water, we escaped without damage.

By the indefatigable exertions of our chief-engineer the engine was set going again, and when below their line of fire, I turned and stood up again for the batteries, thinking that the flag-ship was still above. But afterward, finding that, in the darkness, she had passed below unobserved by us, I dropped down and anchored beside her.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Commander.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding Western Gulf Squadron.*

The carpenter of the Richmond reported the following:

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, July 16, 1862.

SIR: I beg leave respectfully to state the damage sustained by this vessel, off Vicksburg, in the action of the 15th instant.

She was struck by a shot on the port side, at the water-line, under No. 1 gun-port, going in two inches and glancing off; struck by a 9-inch shot under No. 3 gun-port, two feet above the berth-deck, passing through planking-timbers and ceiling, breaking off one hanging and two diagonal knees, demolishing a mess-chest, and lodging on the star-board side. Between Nos. 11 and 13 gun-ports five grape-shot struck the side of the ship; one 6-pound shot struck near the top, on the after

part of No. 12 gun-port, imbedding itself in the timber; a 6-pound shot struck on the forward side of No. 15 gun-port, burying itself in the timber; one 6-pound shot came through the after-port of cabin, carrying away sash, blinds, and bulkhead, and lodging in the signal-room. A large number of bullets struck and lodged in the side; the main-mast and steam-pipe were also struck by bullets. The foretop-sail-yard was struck by a shot, carrying away quarter-blocks and starting the bands.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

H. L. DICKSON, *Carpenter.*

*Commander JAMES ALDEN, U. S. Steamer Richmond.*

U. S. GUNBOAT SCIOTO, ABOVE VICKSBURG, July 15, 1862.

SIR: This morning, about 6.10 o'clock, heavy firing was heard on board this vessel, apparently from the direction of the Yazoo River, the cause of which soon manifested itself in the appearance of the gunboat Tyler, Lieutenant-Commanding Gwinn, running before, and closely followed by, an iron-clad rebel ram—since ascertained to be the Arkansas—escaped out of the Yazoo River. This vessel—of a similar construction to the Louisiana and Mississippi, destroyed at New Orleans; that is, with a screw-propeller and inclined iron sides, armed with nine guns—seemed, from her movements, to trust entirely to her invulnerability for a safe run to the cover of the Vicksburg batteries. The Tyler made a running fight until within our lines, when the vessels opened as their guns bore, the rebel's speed diminishing very visibly. This gunboat was anchored forth in line from up river, without steam, and engines under repairs; but, as soon as I heard the firing, I ordered fire started and steam to be raised with all dispatch. My 11-inch gun being loaded with a 10-second shell, which I had endeavored in vain to draw, as the rebel came within my train I fired, striking him fair, but the shell glanced off almost perpendicularly into the air and exploded. At the same time I opened a brisk fire with all my small-arms against his ports, which, I am confident, prevented them from manning her port-guns till after she had passed us. I observed one man in the act of sponging tumble out of the port, sponge and all, evidently shot by a rifle-ball.

I found my officers and men ready, but such was the suddenness of the appearance and passing of this formidable vessel of the enemy that but little time was afforded for any continued attack upon her with the unwieldy gun carried by this vessel. After passing down-stream out of my line of fire, which he did in from four to six minutes, I was unfortunately only a spectator of the final result of this event.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. LOWRY, *Lieutenant, commanding U. S. Gunboat Scioto.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT, com'd'g West'n Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

U. S. GUNBOAT WINONA, BELOW VICKSBURG, July 16, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that this vessel got under way last evening, and passed, in company with the rest of your fleet, from the anchorage above Vicksburg to that below. All the vessels were subjected to a heavy fire from the numerous batteries, as also to a heavy fire of musketry. We were enabled to fire our 11-inch gun but three times, owing to having received a shot on our port side, which started a heavy leak. Started our deck-pumps immediately, but finding the water gaining, ran in and pivoted the 11-inch gun to starboard to raise the leak out of water; water still gaining, pivoted rifle-gun to starboard; shifted port howitzer over, and shifted shot and shell to starboard. My orders being to anchor at the old anchorage below Vicksburg, I ran down to the lower end of the island and rounded to, with the intention of anchoring, but finding the leak still gaining fast on the pumps, the water up to the top of the ash-pit doors, and being ignorant of the position and nature of the damage causing the leak, I deemed it the safest plan to run the vessel on shore, which was done at the foot of the island, her bow in eight, and stern in eleven feet of water. Upon examination we found that a shot had entered, just above water-line, and close to opening of outboard delivery, breaking valve and cast-iron valve-chest. I enclose herewith report of Mr. Purdy, senior engineer in charge. One other shot struck the spirketing in wake of long port, but did not penetrate. One shell burst among the crew of 11-inch gun, killing one man and very slightly wounding two others. The fragments of this shell tore up the deck water-ways, hatch-combings, and gun-carriage, but the injuries are not serious. In the engagement with the iron-clad gunboat, our side was perforated in several places by fragments of a shell which exploded near the vessel, wounding two men.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ED. T. NICHOLS, *Lieutenant commanding.*

*Flag-Officer D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*commanding Western Division Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

On the morning of the 22d of July another unsuccessful attempt was made to destroy the Arkansas as she was lying at the levee. The mortar-vessels were placed again in the position which they occupied in the former bombardment, and were to open fire on the batteries; while the Essex, under the command of Commodore W. D. Porter, was to run down, brave the fire of the forts, endeavor to strike the ram, and then, if possible, demolish her with her heavy guns. The unarmed ram Queen



of the West, under Colonel Ellet, was also to run down and endeavor to crush in the side of the Arkansas.

The mortars took their position and opened fire; the Essex got under way, and made full at the ram with all her speed. Just before she reached her the Arkansas cast off her bow-line, and, swinging round with the current, the Essex passed her, and ran into the bank fast aground, where for a time she lay motionless, a fair target for the rebel guns. She, however, used her own heavy guns against the ram, as she lay only a few feet distance, shattering somewhat her armor, as was thought, but doing her no essential injury. In the mean time the Queen of the West came on, but was almost immediately so shattered by the rebel fire as to be compelled to retreat; and it was with great difficulty that she could be taken back, in a crippled condition, to her anchorage.

After a severe fight of about ten minutes, as she lay fast on the bank, the Essex was backed off, and passed down the river almost unharmed, amid shot and shell hurled from every fort and battery the guns of which could be brought to bear, and joined the admiral's fleet below.

In regard to the damage received by the Essex, Admiral Farragut wrote: "The Essex, after she got afloat, ran down to our fleet through a storm of shot and shell; and, strange to say, not a shot struck her after she left the upper forts. She was only penetrated by three projectiles from the ram and forts, viz., one 9-inch, one 50-pound rifle solid shot, and one 50-pound conical shell. The last went through the casemates about six feet from the forward corner, and exploded inside, killing one man and wounding three, which was nearly all the damage done the crew. The quick solid shot penetrated the forward casemate nearly amidship, and passed through the iron, but did not go through the wood. The 50-pound rifle passed through the port-quarter, and lodged in the wood-room, doing no harm, but of course each of these shots started the wood and iron considerably, and other shot in the same vicinity would have done much damage." In the same letter the admiral informs the Secretary that General Williams was making preparations to leave Vicksburg with his troops, because he "had not well men enough to take care of the sick ones."

The country has known very little of the fatigue, sickness, suffering, and death of soldiers and sailors in these first efforts to capture Vicksburg. General Williams had just men enough to be thoroughly exposed by exhausting labors in the canal and in the trenches, without being able to render the naval officers any efficient coöperation. His command was continually reduced by sickness, until, as Admiral Farragut wrote, the well were unable to take care of the sick.

The following extract from a letter from Flag-Officer Davis gives an account of the sickness in the fleet:

My force at this moment is very much reduced. It is reduced in the most formidable manner by sickness and death. Of the one hundred and thirty men of the mortar-fleet, one hundred are sick and off duty. The crews of the gunboats are, many of them, reduced to one-half their number. I am in want of at least five hundred men to fill up vacancies and render the vessels under my command efficient.

My force is also reduced by the absence of eight gunboats, three of which are guarding important points of the river, and five of which are undergoing repairs. I have said that I am in want of five hundred men to insure the efficiency of the flotilla. In this calculation I make allowance for the return to duty of many of the sick, but six hundred men would not be too many to send to me. The most sickly part of the season is approaching, and the Department would be surprised to see how the most healthy men wilt and break down under the ceaseless and exhausting heat of this pernicious climate. Men who are apparently in health at the close of the day's work, sink away and die suddenly at night, under the combined effects of heat and malarial poison. The enemy, however, suffers a great deal more than we do. He counts seventeen or twenty thousand men on his rolls, but can hardly muster five thousand in his ranks. To sickness are added, in his case, the want of hospital accommodations, the want of medicines, and the want of suitable food. I learned that General Williams is about to move down the river. Should it prove so, it will be very unfortunate in its results. This is one of the points at which the coöperation of the army is most essential.

In another letter, dated August 1st, the same officer explains the condition of things on the river:

FLAG-STEAMER BENTON, HELENA, *August 1, 1862.*

SIR: In my last communication, dated July 25th, and written from

the anchorage above Vicksburg, I had the honor to inform the Department that Flag-Officer Farragut and Brigadier-General Williams had gone down the river; the forces of the latter being prostrated by sickness. The departure of General Williams rendered it necessary that I should abandon the position I then held, because it gave the enemy the possession of the point, from the canal down.

In making this canal, General Williams used it as a means of defence, by constructing a continued breastwork and rifle-pit on the lower border, and an angle on the upper border to enfilade the canal where it was crossed by the levee. This levee, distinguished as the *new* levee, formed in itself a convenient breastwork. It was no longer safe for the hospital, commissary, ordnance-boats, coal and ice barges, mail-boats, &c., to lie at the bank; I therefore moved up, with my whole command, to the mouth of the Yazoo.

When I sent the Sumter and the Essex below the batteries, I was prepared for Flag-Officer Farragut's leaving; but I had no idea that General Williams intended to abandon his position. I expected to maintain uninterrupted communication with these vessels across the neck, and employ them in blockading the town from below. But now, the army having gone, these vessels must go to Baton Rouge or New Orleans for their supplies, and are permanently separated from my command.

In my dispatch of the 23d ultimo, I informed the Department that several of our mail-boats from Cairo had been fired into, and one sunk. It now appears that the communications in my rear are so seriously threatened that they could only be kept open by gunboats; and the three light and fleet gunboats are all undergoing repairs at Cairo. Information of a reliable and circumstantial character came to me that wagons, &c., had been called in, to transport guns from the Yazoo to the vicinity of Islands No. 92 and 94. I learn from the captains of the mail-boats that flying artillery had been taken from bank to bank, on the great bends of the river, and used twice on the same vessel. Light guns and muskets, in the hands of guerilla bands, had been fired into our unarmed vessels from several points between Carolina Landing and Gaines's Landing. The same thing is said to have occurred near Napoleon. Thus my supplies, as well as mails, were cut off, unless sent under convoy. We have been repeatedly told that General Price was crossing from Mississippi into Arkansas to make a junction with General Hindman.

I have already spoken, in a previous dispatch, of the alarming extent to which the efficiency of the few vessels remaining with me has

been reduced by the endemic fever, and also transmitted a report of the surgeon on this subject.

Having maturely considered all the circumstances just recited, I determined to leave Vicksburg, where my own force, unaided and very much encumbered, could be of no further service; to close up my lines, now too extended; to open again the sources of communication and supply, and to resume my conjunction with the army. Accordingly, I have moved with all the fleet to this place, where I anchored last night at 9 o'clock.

But I wish the Department to particularly understand that this movement does not involve any loss of control over the river below. Between this place and Vicksburg there are no bluffs—no high lands suited to fortifications. Guns can only be mounted on the level bank, where, to be sure, the levee often serves as a breastwork; but they will have no advantage of ground, and can be easily dislodged.

Your telegraphic dispatch of the 25th ultimo was received on the 29th, at 4 A. M., when this ship was opposite Greenville. Flag-Officer Farragut left Vicksburg on the 24th.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. H. DAVIS,

*Flag-Officer, Comd'g U. S. Naval Forces, Western Waters.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

Thus ended the first attempt to capture what the rebels called the Gibraltar of the Mississippi.

## CHAPTER XV.

### OPERATIONS BELOW VICKSBURG.—DESTRUCTION OF THE ARKANSAS.

AFTER General Williams withdrew his troops from Vicksburg, he occupied Baton Rouge; and in this new position Admiral Farragut gave him what support he could by the presence of his ships. On the 4th of August the commanders of the Katahdin, Essex, and Kineo, then lying off Baton Rouge, were notified by General Williams of an expected attack of rebels under General Breckinridge. He communicated his plan of battle, and requested that the gunboats should not fire until notified by him. The tower of the state-house at Baton Rouge overlooks a wide range of the surrounding country; and there Commander Ransom, of the Kineo, stationed an officer, who by signal could give notice to the gunboats in what direction to fire.

It was expected by the rebels that the ram Arkansas and the gunboats Music and Webb would participate in this attack, and definite arrangements had been made for this purpose. Knowing this, information had been sent to Admiral Farragut for assistance, and he immediately went up the river with the Hartford, Brooklyn, and four gunboats, but did not reach Baton Rouge in season to share in the battle.

In the morning the lines of General Williams were so extended, covering the whole front of the enemy, that the gunboats could render no assistance; but late in the afternoon such a change was made in the disposition of the troops as enabled them to open fire with safety. It was done with great execution. Aided by the signals from the state-house, the firing was nearly as accurate as if the enemy were full in view. The shells fell and

exploded in the very midst of the camp and lines; and the rebels, who had been repulsed by General Williams in the earlier part of the day, were compelled to retreat. In this action General Williams was killed.

As has already been stated, the rebels expected to be aided in this attack by the *Arkansas*, which had left Vicksburg for this purpose. Early in the morning, soon after the attack began, the smoke of a steamer, supposed to be the ram, was seen moving down the river rapidly toward the bend above Baton Rouge. This steamer, from some cause then unexplained, stopped about a mile above the bend. In the afternoon of the 5th of August she was joined, judging by the smoke, by two other steamers, which the next morning left her and proceeded up the river.

At 8 o'clock on the morning of the 6th, Commodore W. D. Porter steamed up the river in the *Essex*, and soon came within gunshot of the *Arkansas*, and opened fire. She quickly appeared unmanageable, was run ashore, and deserted by her crew. She was then seen to be in flames; the hawser which held her was burned off, and then she swung round and off into the river, where she soon after blew up.

Commodore Porter not unnaturally believed that she was first disabled, and then set on fire by his shot and shells. However this may have been, he showed a daring courage worthy of all praise in going up to attack the formidable monster; and he was at least the immediate cause of her destruction, and ridding the Mississippi of what was intended to be the scourge and was for a time the terror of the river. The *Arkansas*, as was stated, had a crew of one hundred and eighty men, and mounted six 8-inch and four 50-pounder rifles. If this was her armament, and she was plated, as reported, she was a more formidable vessel than the *Merrimack*.

The rebel account is that the engines of the *Arkansas* were not reliable, and that in going down the river to attack Baton Rouge, her port-engine broke down, and that they spent the day in repairing it when she lay above the bend; that the next morning the engineer said the engines would last half a day, when she started down to attack the *Essex*, then coming up, when the starboard-engine broke down, and the ram being un-

manageable, she was run ashore and set on fire by order of her captain. However the destruction of the *Arkansas* was brought about, there was good reason for the following expression, in a letter of Admiral Farragut to the Secretary: "It is one of the happiest moments of my life that I am enabled to inform the Department of the destruction of the ram *Arkansas*." He adds that he had not "held the iron-clad in such terror, but the community did." If the rebel accounts are true in regard to the failure of her engines, if the character of her armor and her armament were correctly stated, the admiral and the whole country had much reason to rejoice at her short career.

What some call the fatality attending the rebel iron-clads is a subject worthy of some consideration, and the attention of the reader will be called to the matter in a future chapter upon the rebel navy. They constructed, during the war, a really formidable fleet of iron-clads, much more powerful than is generally supposed; and our own Navy has never received due credit for the rapid destruction or capture of these armored ships. When we think of the *Merrimack*, the *Albemarle*, the *Virginia* (*at Richmond*), the *Tennessee*, the *Atlanta*, the *Louisiana*, the *Manassas*, the *Mississippi*, and the *Arkansas*, one is amazed at the little which was accomplished by them, and how by unforeseen causes their course was suddenly ended. To one accustomed to look beyond second causes to the unforeseen power controlling all, the destruction of these vessels seems to reveal the special interposition of Him to whose ever-watching care the nation owed its deliverance.

So far as mere human judgment could decide a matter, the rebels, in the earlier part of the conflict, had good reason to suppose that they would soon have afloat a navy superior to our own. It certainly produces no very pleasant feeling now in the breast of any friend of the Union to consider what our condition would have been with such vessels as the *Merrimack*, the *Atlanta*, and *Tennessee* upon our coast, and we with no *Monitor* or other suitable ship to meet them. These formidable mailed frigates were so quickly and so unexpectedly destroyed, what they accomplished was so disproportioned to their real power, that it appears almost as if they were broken without hand.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### BATTLE AT ST. CHARLES, ON THE WHITE RIVER.—TERRIBLE SCENE ON THE MOUND CITY.

A SHORT time previous to the events just narrated, an expedition was fitted out from the Upper Mississippi squadron, to go up the White River and capture, if possible, some batteries, located about eighty miles from the mouth of the river. The expedition consisted of the gunboats Mound City, St. Louis, Lexington, Conestoga, and transports for a regiment of troops under Colonel Fitch. They got under way from a point called Arkansas Cut-off, on the morning of the 16th of June, and proceeded up the river. They anchored for the night about five miles from the enemy's works, and reconnoitred the river, ascertained the location of the batteries, and went on the next morning to within two miles of the fortifications. Here the rebel pickets were discovered, and the gunboats opened fire. At the same time Colonel Fitch landed his regiment. The troops drove in the pickets, and the gunboats stood on, firing on either side and ahead as they went.

Very soon obstructions were discovered ahead. A gunboat, which had been dismounted to furnish guns for the battery, and two river-boats had been sunk across the channel opposite a bluff, where it was presumed the battery was located, although, on account of a thick wood, nothing could be seen. The gunboats went steadily on, firing as they went; and in a few moments a response from the rebels revealed the location of the battery.

The Mound City had approached within about six hundred yards of the enemy's guns, when a shot from a new battery



higher up the bluff, pierced her port-casemate forward and above the port-guns, killing three men as it passed, and exploding her steam-drum. It was probably the most destructive shot fired during the war. The scene on the gunboat was too horrible to admit of any correct description. Out of a crew of about one hundred and seventy-five officers and men, only twenty-six escaped unhurt, and among these only two officers, the master and gunner. Many were blown overboard, scalded, or otherwise wounded; many leaped into the river to escape the steam, and these, struggling with wounds, or striving to swim ashore or to the boats which were sent to their rescue, were fired upon by the rebels, both by the great guns, and muskets and rifles; and many were thus killed in the water. Dead and mangled men strewed the decks of the ill-fated gunboat, and the screams of those whose skins had been stripped from them by the rush of the steam were too much to be endured; and such was the terror of the scene that it unsettled temporarily the reason of one of the surviving officers, who was himself uninjured, and whose bravery was never disputed.

Commander Kelly, a gallant officer, was very severely scalded, and at first it was thought that he could not survive. Fifty-nine of the gunboat's crew were buried at once that evening—one of the saddest funerals of the war. During this scene, Colonel Fitch charged the enemy's battery, and carried it without loss. The fort was commanded by Lieutenant Fry, formerly of the United States Navy, who gave the order for firing into the boats and at the wounded men as they struggled in the water, and whose atrocious conduct gave the world another proof of the savage spirit with which the rebels conducted the war. Slavery and Christian civilization cannot exist together. The following extract from Flag-Officer Davis will show his opinion of this matter :

After the explosion took place, the wounded men were shot by the enemy while in the water, and the boats of the *Conestoga*, *Lexington*, and *St. Louis*, which went to the assistance of the scalded and drowning men of the *Mound City*, were fired into, both with great guns and muskets, and were disabled, and one of them forced on shore to prevent sinking. The forts were commanded by Lieutenant Joseph Fry, late of

the United States Navy, who is now a prisoner and wounded. The Department and the country will contrast these barbarities of a savage enemy with the humane efforts made by our own people to rescue the wounded and disabled, under similar circumstances, in the engagement of the 6th instant.

Several of the poor fellows who expired shortly after the engagement expressed their willingness to die when they were told that the victory was ours.

## CHAPTER XVII

### OPERATIONS OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT'S SQUADRON IN THE WATERS OF LOUISIANA AND TEXAS.

THE situation of affairs on the Mississippi and the adjacent waters of the coast after the fruitless attacks on Vicksburg is easily understood. Vicksburg was daily becoming stronger by new earthworks and additional guns. Above, Davis's fleet had retired to Helena. His armored gunboats could pass up and down the river between Vicksburg and the towns above, but every day it became more dangerous for the unarmed transports, which were continually fired upon by field artillery conveyed from point to point, and by riflemen in ambush.

Below Vicksburg, Farragut's fleet could also pass up and down, but every day the batteries at the principal points became more dangerous, while field-pieces were planted daily at every available point, and, though driven away by every gunboat which passed, they were brought back so soon as the vessel was gone, to open again on the next one which hove in sight.

The water in the Mississippi had fallen, so that the decks of the boats were some twenty feet below the top of the levee, and these banks formed an admirable breastwork, from which, and behind which, the rebels could deliver a plunging fire, with very little danger of being struck in return. It was evident that the great "inland sea" was being gradually closed again, notwithstanding the gallant efforts and the brilliant victories of the river-fleets.

The utmost that Admiral Farragut could do on the Mississippi was to keep up a perilous patrol, and intercept, so far as

he could, supplies which were passing eastward from Texas and other regions west of the river. In this service, his ships and their boats performed a work whose importance could not be truly estimated by the country, for there was very little glory gained in the arduous and hazardous work. Important salt-works, upon which the rebels depended for their daily supplies, were broken up; countless boats and small-craft, engaged in active traffic which nourished rebellion, were destroyed, many small depots of internal trade were ruined, and thus the rebellion was dried up in the very sources of its life. Large droves of cattle coming in from Texas were captured, thus cutting off the supplies for the rebel army, and furnishing our own troops and the ships.

This service, also, was at all times a dangerous one. It was a series of skirmishes and ambushes on the bayous and narrow streams, where every lurking-place was known to the foe, and where batteries could be effectually concealed in the thickets. The channels, wherever gunboats were compelled to go, were narrow, and the water was shallow; and, as the rebels knew well the dangerous places, they placed guns so as to bear upon the points where our vessels were likely to get aground or entangled by obstructions. In addition to these difficulties, torpedoes were planted in the narrow channels, so that our vessels and their boats were continually in the midst of dangers seen and unseen.

In order to judge aright the difficulties and dangers with which Admiral Farragut, his officers and men had now to contend, and the work which they actually performed, one must consider the nature and extent of the field in which they were operating. This field extended first from Vicksburg to the mouth of the Mississippi, and both sides of the river were to be watched as far as possible; for, from the mouth of every little creek and bayou, rebel craft of some kind were constantly gliding out on errands in aid of the enemy, and supplies were collected at every favorable point, and hurried across whenever the watchfulness of our gunboats could be evaded. The country below New Orleans is covered by a net-work of small lakes and connecting channels, affording countless lurking-places for small steamers, schooners, sloops, and boats—cov-

erts known only to those familiar with the country. On many of the larger channels batteries were erected, and riflemen were concealed in the jungles along them all. Numerous boat-expeditions for breaking up these small rebel centres of operations were sent out from the ships—a work attended with great danger, occasioning almost daily loss of life, and bringing on disease from the miasma of the swamps; but of these deaths, wounds, and sufferings from disease, the country knew little or nothing.

Then the whole coast from the mouth of the great river to the Rio Grande was in the hands of the rebels, and from every river, mouth, and bay along this vast extent of coast-line, traders were running to and from the West India islands laden with supplies. Wherever the ships moved, they encountered a battery, or riflemen in ambush, or both; and though they could generally drive the rebel gunners off with grape, canister, or shells, yet the moment the battle was over the battery was remanned and ready for another fight. A more annoying, perplexing work, one affording less satisfaction, or glory, or reward of any kind, was never committed to brave men than was the whole task of the Navy upon our Southern coast and the inland waters. No country is better fitted for defence than that held by the rebels; and that they were finally subdued on their own field proves, beyond all dispute, not only the greater resources, but the superior skill and more enduring courage of the North.

Corpus Christi Bay, in Texas, well down toward the Rio Grande, was one of the points from which the enemy carried on a brisk trade with Havana and the islands under English control; and the admiral, in August, sent out an expedition, under Lieutenant J. W. Kittredge, to this place. Commander W. B. Renshaw was ordered to Galveston with the gunboats *Owasco*, *Harriet Lane*, *Clifton*, and *Westfield*; and the *Kensington*, the *Rachel Seaman*, and a launch were sent to Sabine Pass. He anticipated great difficulties and small results from these attempts; for, although he knew that each of these places could be easily captured, he had no troops with which to hold them. He wrote as follows: "All we want, as I have told the Department in my last dispatch, is a few soldiers to hold the places, and we will soon have the whole coast. It is a much better

mode, and a more effectual blockade, to have the vessels inside than outside."

These operations will give an idea of the kind of warfare in which our Navy was engaged, at times when the country, hearing of no great battles, was inclined sometimes to think that nothing was being done. The rebels had many small steamers, sloops, and schooners in these Southern waters that were armed, and thus aided to some extent in protecting their inland and coastwise trade. Some of these were in Corpus Christi Bay and the adjacent waters. One purpose of Lieutenant Kittredge was to destroy this small craft. On the 12th of August one of these small armed vessels appearing in sight, the yacht *Corypheus*, of only one hundred tons, but carrying a 30-pounder Parrott rifle, gave chase, passing through the channel called the "Dug-out," and soon brought her within range of her gun. The rebel schooner immediately headed for the beach, and was run ashore, set on fire, and deserted.

At the same time another armed schooner, the *Elmer*, was abandoned and burned; and on the other side of the bay a sloop was also burned. Thus, in one day, two armed schooners and one sloop were destroyed, and the trade of the bay received a severe check.

On the 16th of August, after some fruitless negotiations for the evacuation of Corpus Christi by the rebel troops, our little squadron was fired upon from a battery behind the levee, and a spirited small fight began. It was not difficult to drive the rebels from their guns; but the moment the vessels ceased firing they were again manned, and the battle recommenced. The *Sachem* received one shot through her hull and several in her rigging, and one passed through the magazine of the *Corypheus* without producing an explosion. Not a very brilliant or satisfactory fight. At night the little vessels withdrew out of range. The next day another steamer of the rebels was burned, cutting off one more small supply-vein of the enemy. Not satisfied at being thus foiled by the battery, Lieutenant Kittredge made arrangements for attacking it again; and the rebels also prepared for a more serious defence. Three small vessels composed the fleet: the yacht *Corypheus*, the little steamer *Sachem*, and the schooner *Reindeer*, carrying one 24-pounder howitzer.

Thirty men, with the 12-pounder howitzer from the *Corypheus*, were landed, with the intention of getting a position where the battery could be enfiladed. The three vessels and men on shore were no sooner in position than the rebels sent a flanking force of about one hundred and fifty men to the right of the howitzer on shore, and attempted its capture. But the *Sachem* and *Reindeer* supported the little band of thirty with such a rapid fire of grape, shrapnel, and canister, that the rebel force was thrown into confusion. At this moment some two hundred and fifty cavalry came sweeping down upon the thirty and their gun, and for a short time their capture seemed certain; but the rebels were met by so accurate a fire from the vessels, that the cavalry were repulsed as the infantry had been, and with considerable loss they retreated to the shelter of the town.

Having no force wherewith to hold the town, Lieutenant Kittredge shelled out the rebel forces, driving them back into the plains. After this the little fleet was withdrawn. The vessels received some injuries, the *Sachem* having several shot in her hull and upper works, and others in her smoke-stack and rigging. Such was one of the almost countless battles of which the country scarcely heard. Each one by itself was of little importance; but they brought toil, peril, and death to our brave men; and the results, in the aggregate, were disastrous to the rebel cause, by destroying their internal and coastwise commerce. A few days after this, Lieutenant Kittredge and seven men, his boat's crew, were surprised and captured at Flour Bluff, and taken to Houston.

#### CAPTURE OF SABINE PASS.

The expedition before mentioned as having been sent against Sabine Pass was successful, so far as it could be with no land force to occupy the place after the batteries were taken and the guns spiked. The operations at that point are well described by Acting-Master Quincy A. Hooper, commanding the *Rachel Seaman*:

UNITED STATES SCHOONER *RACHEL SEAMAN*, }  
SABINE PASS, TEXAS, *October 5, 1862.* }

SIR: In the temporary absence of Captain Crocker, of the steamer *Kensington*, commanding the expedition, I have the honor of submitting

to you the following report of the occupation of this place by the forces detailed by you for that purpose, viz : The Rachel Seaman left Pensacola in tow of the Kensington, Friday, the 19th ultimo, and arrived off the bar of this place, Monday, the 22d ultimo, anchoring within five miles of the fort; wind light from the north, channel trending northwest.

*Tuesday, September 23.*—Captain Crocker, with Assistant-Surgeon Cobb, Assistant-Paymaster Tarbell, Acting-Masters Taylor and Hammond, and Master's-Mate Finney, came on board, while the Kensington's launch and first cutter, each with a howitzer and otherwise armed and equipped, were alongside. All this day we were engaged in towing and kedging over the bar. At 6 P. M. came to anchor two and half miles from the fort, and sent assistance to the mortar-schooner Henry Janes, which had previously arrived. During the night a boat in charge of Mr. Somers, master's mate, rowed guard, going in above the fort.

*Wednesday, September 24.*—At 9 A. M. we opened fire upon the fort from our 20-pound rifle and two broadside 32's of fifty-seven hundred-weight. We fired eleven times from our position of two and a half miles' distance. The Henry Janes fired three shell from her mortar, at a distance of three miles; our shell all fell within or beyond the fort. The enemy promptly replied, most of their shot falling short of us. Finding this to be too long a range for good execution, ceased firing, and both vessels proceeded to kedge nearer the fort. At 5 P. M. we had succeeded in obtaining a position one and one-half mile from the fort, both vessels in a line. While getting this position, the fort had continued a brisk fire upon us, the shot all falling near us. Notwithstanding that we were for some time unable to return the fire, our officers and men all remained perfectly cool. At 5.30 P. M. both vessels opened fire, making splendid shots; at 6.15 ceased firing for the night. It was then determined to attempt the capture the fort with our boats; and at 11.30 P. M. the launch, in charge of Acting-Master Hammond, with Captain Crocker in command; the first cutter, in charge of Edwin Janverin, master's mate of this vessel, each boat with a howitzer, and a boat with five men, in charge of Mr. Sommers, as a spiking-party, started in-shore. The boat succeeded in getting above the fort, but got aground among the oyster-reefs, in which the bay abounds, and were unable to get into the channel which would lead to the rear of the fort. After rowing until near daylight, the attempt was given up.

*Thursday, September 25.*—At daylight we opened fire with our Parrott rifle. We fired three shell directly into the fort; this bringing no response, and seeing no one about the fort and no flag flying, we ceased firing, and Captain Crocker went in, under a flag of truce, and



found the fort evacuated and the guns spiked. The guns consisted of two 32's of 7,000 pounds each, and two 32's of forty-two hundred-weight. Captain Crocker then started for the town, but was met by a deputation of three citizens, who said that the mayor had died two days previous, and that nearly all the citizens had left on account of the yellow fever, which had been raging badly, but was then abating. After giving and receiving the necessary assurances of good conduct, &c., Captain Crocker returned on board, deeming it not prudent to allow any one to land. In the mean time, the schooners had got under way and stood in, the Rachel Seaman anchoring abreast of the fort, and the Henry Janes five hundred yards below. In the course of the day I sent in a boat and burnt the barrack building and gun-carriages.

*Friday, September 26.*—Captain Crocker, with his officers and men, returned to the Kensington, and got under way for Mermantau River, fifty miles to the eastward, where some steamers were reported to be hidden.

*Saturday, September 27.*—At 10 p. m. two boats from the Henry Janes, with one boat from this vessel, pulled up the river about fifteen miles, burnt a railroad bridge, and intercepted a mail.

*Monday, September 29.*—The Kensington returned unsuccessful.

*Tuesday, September 30.*—The Kensington overhauled and brought in a small schooner from Sisal, Mexico, bound to New Orleans, with leather, bagging, and salt, under English papers; she was standing in, however, for this port. Her captain and crew of seven men were transferred to the Kensington.

*Thursday, October 2.*—Three of our boats, with two from the Henry Janes, went up the river about five miles and brought down the families of Messrs. Kirkpatrick and Davis, who claimed our protection; they were placed on board of prize-schooner Velocity. After taking the families, the depot was burned. The Kensington again absent on an expedition.

*Monday, October 6.*—Early this morning descried a schooner standing in; sent a boat, in charge of Mr. Janverin, to board her. She proved to be the schooner Dart, from Sisal, bound to New Orleans, with a cargo of salt, rope, and leather; she was brought in and anchored near us. The captain, who is a resident of this place, with the crew, was brought on board of this vessel. The Dart was under English papers, and will be retained until the return of Captain Crocker.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

QUINCY A. HOOPER,

*Acting Master U. S. N., com'dg U. S. Schooner Rachel Seaman.*  
*Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding Western Gulf Squadron.*

A much larger trade was carried on from Sabine Pass than our Government had supposed before its capture. The quantity of goods of all kinds and munitions of war run in there by our English friends was enormous, and, at the same time, they supplied themselves with a large amount of cotton, brought to that point from all the country round. At the time of its capture, eight steamers and six schooners were lying in the waters above the pass. Quite a large body of troops were also collected above, and as the rebels were intending to man the steamers and make an attack on our little fleet, Captain Crocker, commanding the Kensington, put a 30-pounder Parrott on the steamer Dan, which he had just captured at Calcasieu River, and with the Velocity, and a strong party from the Kensington, remained to defend the pass, while the Kensington went down the coast. Immediately after this, Captain Crocker fitted out an expedition to destroy the large railroad bridge at Taylor's Bayou, which would prevent some expected reinforcements of the enemy from approaching. The bridge was entirely destroyed; an encampment, with the barracks, was burned, as were also two schooners which were lying there. Thus daily were the resources of the rebels destroyed.

#### CAPTURE OF GALVESTON.

The expedition sent against Galveston was, like the others, successful; but, also, for the want of the needed support, it produced no permanent result, for, as it proved, all this field had to be fought over again after the rebels had greatly strengthened their defences. The war on the Mississippi and on this coast was prolonged at least one year, because the Navy was not supported by the needed land force. The fleet sent against Galveston consisted of the Harriet Lane, Westfield, Owasco, Clifton, and the mortar-schooner Henry Janes. They expected a destructive fire from a formidable-looking battery on Pelican Island, but, on approaching it, all was silent, and they soon found that the battery mounted only wooden guns. On Fort Point a heavy 10-inch columbiad was mounted, but the first shell from the Owasco burst directly over the gunners' heads, and scattered them in all directions, after which the fighting was by no means severe. The town was entirely at the mercy

of the fleet, but the question how to compel them to surrender without destroying it and injuring the innocent was a somewhat difficult one. They could land and hoist the American flag, and defend it with their guns, and that was all. Commander Renshaw thus gives his opinion of the results of the capture: "At present, my opinion is that I can do nothing more to-morrow, after taking possession of the city, than landing a party to hoist our flag on the custom-house, and, after allowing it to fly for about half an hour, haul it down and return on board."

About the same time with these operations on the coast there was a brief action on the Mississippi near Donaldsonville, which illustrates very clearly and sadly the nature of the service then performed by the Navy. One very important branch of this work was to watch for the droves of cattle which were continually brought forward from the plains of Texas for the rebel armies. Thousands of these cattle were intercepted at different points on the river, and were disposed of according to circumstances. Many were taken to New Orleans on transports conveyed by the gunboats.

On the 4th of October the Scioto and Kineo were taking down a fleet of transports loaded with cattle, when they were fired upon by a concealed battery, with some very sad results. The historian cannot do better than to quote here the narratives of the officers commanding these gunboats. From these the country may learn how our Navy on the river was employed when so many supposed that it was idle.

U. S. GUNBOAT SCIOTO, NEW ORLEANS, LA., *October 4, 1862.*

SIR: I have to report that this day, about 1.30 P. M., some two miles below Donaldsonville, a rebel force, consisting of some six pieces or more of flying artillery, supported by a large body of infantry, probably as many as fifteen hundred, opened a severe and hot fire upon this vessel and a convoy of army transports loaded with cattle. So skilfully concealed was the battery and the ambush of the footmen, that it was not until this vessel was abreast of the enemy, and they had opened their fire, that they were discovered; and, though the crew were at quarters and the ship cleared for action, still, such was the speed of the vessel, that she had passed so far below the rebel battery as to render it impossible to train the guns abaft enough to bear on the enemy be-

yond some three rounds from all the battery, but, ordering the convoy to seek safety in flight, I put my helm hard astarboard and rounded-to, the shifting pivots to port, when I opened an effective fire of grape, canister, and shell, with such results as soon to silence nearly all the fire of the rebels. The Kineo, some distance astern, coming rapidly to my support, and with a rapid fire driving the enemy, who were above my line of fire, from their position, to seek safety in a cowardly flight, after a concealed and assassin-like attack.

I regret to report that Lieutenant Charles H. Swasey, executive officer of this vessel, was mortally wounded while gallantly performing his duty, having just pointed and fired the 9-inch gun. A 12-pounder rifle-shot entered the bulwark, striking him on the hip and inflicting a terrible and mortal wound, of which he expired at 3 P. M.

This officer was characterized by all the elements which make up the hero—brave, imbued with patriotic ardor and professional ambition, chivalric as a gentleman, gentle, and with a heart full of Christian principles. His last words were: "Tell my mother I tried to be a good man." I respectfully request that his death, so heroic and noble, may be especially made known to the nation through the Navy Department.

John O'Hare, landsman, was wounded by a round shot in the right arm, rendering amputation necessary.

I consider it my duty to call attention to this action, as corroborating, to a great extent, the information that I had the honor to send to Commodore Henry W. Morris on the 9th of September, to the effect that the enemy were daily gaining strength and audacity, so that in a short time the present force in this river will not be sufficient to hold it for the Government. From additional information, I am again forced to represent that, from New Orleans to Vicksburg, on both sides of the river, all the residents are hostile to the United States, and in arms against us; that conscription is rapidly forming large bodies of men to resist us. The low state of the river places the open-decked gunboats some twenty feet, and at a great disadvantage, below the crest of the levee, which is a strong, safe, and ready-made breastwork for sharpshooters, leaving their women in their residences, and relying upon their feebleness to protect them and their property from the righteous punishment which should await them for their treason. The male residents are all more or less in arms, and steadily gaining strength. The most energetic and severe measures are necessary to reduce these people to subjection and obedience to the laws of the United States.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. LOWRY, *Lieutenant-commanding, U. S. Navy.*

*Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT, com'd'g W'n Gulf Blockading Squadron.*

U. S. GUNBOAT KINEO, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, October 4, 1862.

SIR: I have to report that while steaming down the river, as convoy to six transport steamers with cattle, this afternoon—the Scioto ahead, the Kineo and Itasca following—at about 2.10 P. M. a sharp fire was opened upon us from the west bank, about two miles below Donaldsonville, with musketry and artillery. It was returned, promptly, from each gunboat—by the Kineo, with the 11-inch pivot Parrott rifle howitzer and 32-pounder—with such effect that the enemy were soon compelled to withdraw from the bank. We kept steadily on down the river, as I deemed it of great importance to insure a safe and very quick transportation of the cattle to a place where they might be released from confinement, lest many might be lost for want of food and water.

I will now return to endeavor to secure, with the aid of the Katahdin and Itasca, the remainder of the drove—about 200—which we were compelled by circumstances to leave behind.

Lieutenant Commander Lowry will explain to you in person more particularly, and doubtless more satisfactorily than I can in the hurry of the present moment, the condition of things and the circumstances under which we still hold about 200 head of cattle, nine miles above Donaldsonville.

I enclose herewith a report from Assistant-Surgeon A. S. Oberly of killed and wounded on board this vessel in the action of to-day.

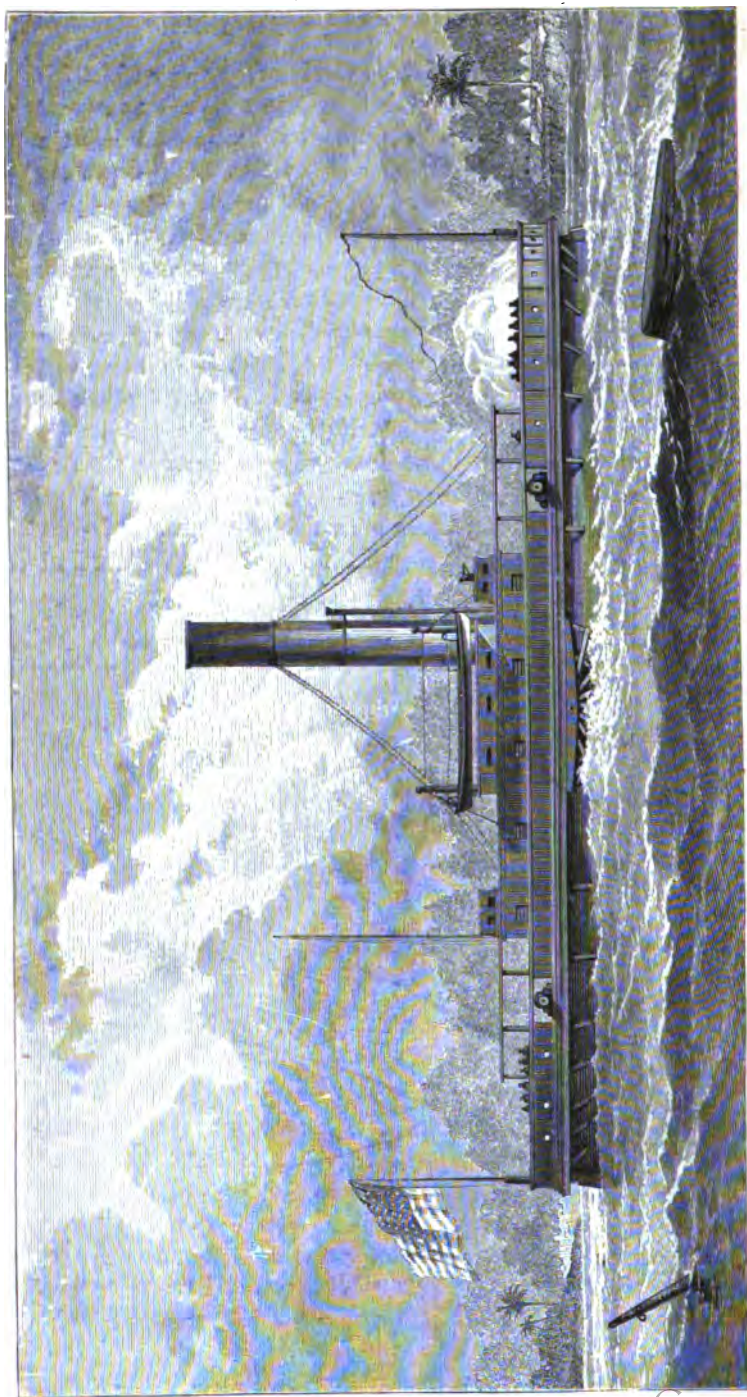
I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your ob't servant,

GEO. M. RANSOM, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Commodore* HENRY W. MORRIS,

*Senior Officer, present, New Orleans.*





FERRY GUNBOAT THE "ELLEN."







## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BEGINNING OF MORE SEVERE WORK WITH THE THREE GREAT DIVISIONS OF THE NAVY.

FROM the time of the capture of New Orleans, till near the close of 1862, little was done by the Navy that excited any lively interest in the country. Vicksburg had arrested the descent of the Mississippi squadron; and although Farragut passed the batteries up and down defiantly with some of his ships, he made little impression upon the stronghold of the rebels. Nor could he do more, in the nature of things, unless sustained by the Army. Nor is it intended by this remark, or similar ones elsewhere, to throw any reproach upon the War Department, or any officer of the Army. To justify the Navy Department and its officers for not accomplishing more in those many months of toil, anxiety, and suffering, it is only necessary to make it known that it was absolutely impossible for them to do more without a strong coöperating force on land, and that the troops were not furnished. Why they were not, it is not the province of this history to inquire. During the spring, summer, and autumn of 1862, the work of the Navy, at all points, was an annoying and exhausting one; a desultory warfare with batteries and ambushed rebels, and small expeditions, necessary, and mostly successful, but perilous and inglorious.

At the very time when the country was impatient over the supposed inaction of the various squadrons, the labor, the anxiety, and the exposure of officers and men were greater than at any other period of the war. Not a true officer or seaman among them all but would have chosen at any time such a fight as that at New Orleans or Mobile rather than the vexatious

skirmishes along the rivers and bayous, or the convoying of troops, or the sick and wounded, or even herds of cattle, with a rebel battery ready to open at every turn in the river. In such operations as have been detailed in some of the preceding chapters, the season wore away. New Orleans and the river above Vicksburg were held; but the rebels, stung by the loss of their great commercial city, and seeing that their sources of supply were being cut off along the Western rivers and the Southern coast, were making desperate efforts to recover what they had lost; and in this attempt they were greatly encouraged by the fact that, however often our vessels might silence their batteries, they could neither hold them nor their towns, and all returned to their possession again the moment the fleet had passed.

As a single illustration of what was done, tables is here added of articles which were destroyed in a single expedition in St. Andrew's Bay, Florida:

*Account of Salt Pots and Pans destroyed by an Expedition from U. S. Steamer Albatross, Nov. 24, 1862, St. Andrew's Bay, Florida.*

No. of Pots.	Capacity of each in gallons.	Total No. gallons.
24	6, 150; 12, 100; 5, 75; 3, 125 .....	2,700
25	11, 40; 10, 70; 4, 75 .....	1,440
21	25 .....	525
12	3, 100; 5, 70; 4, 75 .....	950
39	9, 100; 6, 70; 9, 45; 9, 40; 6, 25 .....	2,285
17	8, 150; 4, 100; 5, 40 .....	1,800
35	8, 125; 20, 45; 9, 45 .....	1,875
33	3, 150; 2, 100; 20, 70; 8, 45 .....	2,410
24	9, 100; 9, 70; 7, 25 .....	1,705
Pans, 5	250 .....	1,250
235		16,890
Nov. 27, 20	90 .....	1,800
		18,690
Dec. 8, 59	50 .....	2,950
	Total .....	21,640

With the above there were destroyed furnaces, pumps, boxes, barrels, sheds, houses, and wagons, containing salt in quantities that I could not estimate. Whenever I found any thing connected with the manufacture of salt, I destroyed it.

Respectfully, JOHN E. HART, *Lt. Com'dr., U. S. N.*

ST. ANDREW'S BAY, November 24, 1862.

*Account of Pots and Salt destroyed by Boat Expedition from United States  
Brig Bohio, George W. Browne, commanding.*

No. of Pans.	Capacity of each in gallons.	Total capacity in gallons.	Bushels Salt destroyed.
6	100.....	600	10
7	200.....	1,400	4
9	6,200; 3, 100.....	1,500	3
5	150.....	750	4
6	2, 60; 4, 100.....	520	6
4	80.....	320	9
13	9, 100; 4, 75.....	1,200	7
2	150.....	300	2
14	11, 90; 3, 150.....	1,440	175
7	4, 60; 3, 100.....	540	60
6	4, 100; 2, 50.....	500	20
8	4, 60; 4, 40.....	400	40
17	10, 100; 7, 80.....	1,560	50
4	150.....	600	19
5	100.....	500	1
7	40.....	280	2
5	60.....	300	70
6	100.....	600	60
2	150.....	300	20
4	90.....	360	2
5	100.....	500	3
3	60.....	180	1
1	250.....	250	...
4	100.....	400	...
2	400.....	800	...
152		16,100	568

Respectfully,

GEORGE W. BROWNE,

*Acting Master, commanding.**Lieut.-Commander JOHN E. HART, commanding Expedition.*

The plan adopted by the rebels to retrieve their waning fortunes was a perfectly natural one, and was so far effectual as to cause us some of the most mortifying delays and disasters of the war. They did not consider it possible to recapture New Orleans and hold it against our ships, but they strengthened to the utmost the fortifications above New Orleans, including those of Vicksburg. They were especially anxious to render Vicksburg, Port Hudson, and Baton Rouge impregnable and impassable, because then the long reach of the river between Baton Rouge and Vicksburg would be clear for the crossing of the

immense supplies which they were drawing from the Red River between Louisiana and Texas. They felt also severely the loss of Galveston, Sabine Pass, and the presence of our gunboats and smaller vessels in the inner waters of the coast. They also strengthened to the utmost the defences of Charleston, Wilmington, Mobile, and Savannah. The season of 1862 closed with expeditions for the destruction of salt-works, and the capture of small-craft here and there in the rivers and bayous, and the seizure of blockade-runners; but it was evident to all who knew the situation in the beginning of 1863, that the rebels were determined on a desperate conflict, and that the Government must prepare itself for very serious work beset with many and great difficulties. The operations at and around Vicksburg, the battles on the lower Mississippi, the assault on Charleston, and the depredations of the Alabama, were soon to arouse the attention not only of this country but of Europe.

The year opened with disaster. Three companies of the Forty-second Massachusetts regiment had been stationed at Galveston, and to them and some steamers, one of which was the *Harriet Lane*, was committed the task of holding this important point. The rebels, aware of their advantage, made extensive preparations for an attack upon our fleet, and for recapturing Galveston. They fitted out and armed two or three common river-steamers for a night attack upon our fleet, while a body of troops were to make, simultaneously, an attack upon our force of two hundred and sixty men. The rebel steamers were barricaded with cotton-bales, and one of them carried a 68-pounder gun, which, however, burst at the third fire. One had on board two hundred men, and the other one hundred and sixty; the idea being to carry our steamers by a surprise and by boarding.

On the morning of the 1st of January, 1863, at half-past one o'clock, three rebel steamers were seen coming down the bay. Of the intention to make this attack the commanders of the land and naval forces were apprised on the preceding day. Our people there were in no sense taken by surprise. The probability of the attack was known, and on a moonlight night they saw the enemy approaching. The *Westfield* was found hard aground, at high water, and signalled for immediate assistance.

Two steamers attacked the *Harriet Lane*, one of which was soon so much injured by a collision that she was obliged to back off upon the flats, where she sank in shallow water, so that the troops on board could still use their muskets upon the *Lane*. The other steamer ran into the *Lane*, and was so caught in the collision that the two were held together, and, in a short time, the *Harriet Lane* was carried by boarding. A flag of truce was then sent off to the *Clifton*, the officer bearing it representing that Commander Wainwright and Lieutenant Lee, next in command, were killed or mortally wounded, as were also one-half of the crew of the *Harriet Lane*; that this steamer and four others were then ready to move against the next vessel near them, and proposed that all the steamers should be surrendered but one, and in this one, the crews of the remainder should leave the harbor. It was agreed to communicate this message to Commander Renshaw, on condition that all the steamers, in the mean time, should remain in the position they then occupied until the question should be settled. To this the officer assented, and three hours' time was agreed upon. In the mean time, however, paying no attention to the agreement, the rebels changed the position of the steamers and erected some new batteries. Commander Renshaw refused the conditions, and ordering all the vessels that could, to leave the harbor, he determined to blow up his own gunboat. Through haste, or inadvertence of some kind, the explosion was premature, and Commander Renshaw, Lieutenant Zimmerman, Engineer Green, and some ten or fifteen of the crew perished with the vessel. The rest of the squadron, with the exception of two coal-barks, made their escape. The only injury done to the *Harriet Lane* was by an 11-inch shell under her counter, fired by one of our own steamers.

Thus terminated one of the most mortifying engagements of our Navy during the war, scarce equalled, except by the affair at the passes of the Mississippi, when the *Manassas* frightened away our blockading squadron. Our naval force at Galveston consisted of the *Westfield*, *Clifton*, *Harriet Lane*, *Owasco*, *Sachem*, and *Corypheus*, and yet two or three river-steamers, armored with cotton-bales, captured one, caused another to be blown up, and drove the rest ingloriously off, and declared the

blockade at an end. Fortunately, few such stains as this rest upon the honor of the Navy. In this affair, as near as can be ascertained, some twenty were killed, and about forty wounded. When censure of this kind is bestowed, the reader has a right to know upon what evidence it is based, and therefore the writer presents him the finding of the court of inquiry and the accompanying letter of Admiral Farragut :

UNITED STATES STEAM-SLOOP HARTFORD, }  
AT ANCHOR OFF NEW ORLEANS, *January 12, 1863.* }

SIR: In conformity with your instructions, we proceed to state the facts in relation to the capture of Galveston, Texas, on the 1st of January, 1863, as elicited by the testimony before the court of inquiry.

The naval force in possession consisted of the Westfield, Clifton, Harriet Lane, Owasco, Sachem, and Corypheus. The two latter had joined only two days previous to the attack, having come up from below, the Sachem (steamer) in a broken-down condition, and the Corypheus as her escort. The positions of the vessels were as shown by the accompanying chart. The United States troops on shore consisted of two hundred and sixty rank and file, commanded by Colonel Burrel, of the Forty-second Massachusetts, volunteers, occupying, by advice of the commanding naval officer, a wharf in the town. It seems that, the night previous to the attack, information had been received by the commanding officers of both land and naval forces that such an attempt might be made.

At 1.30 P. M. on the 1st of January, it being bright moonlight, some two or three rebel steamers were discovered in the bay above by the Clifton. The Westfield, from the other channel, likewise made the same discovery. The naval forces, therefore, were not taken by surprise.

Very soon after, our troops on shore learned through their pickets that the artillery of the enemy was in possession of the market place, about one-quarter of a mile distant. The attack commenced on shore about 3 A. M. by the enemy upon our troops, which were defended by the Sachem and Corypheus with great energy; our troops only replying with musketry, having no artillery. About dawn the Harriet Lane was attacked, or rather attacked two rebel steamers, one of which, the Bayou City, was armed with a 68-pounder rifle-gun, had two hundred troops, and was barricaded with cotton-bales some twenty feet from the water-line.

The other, the Neptune, was similarly barricaded, and was armed with two small brass pieces and one hundred and sixty men (both were

common river-steamers). The *Harriet Lane* was under way in time, and went up to the attack firing her bow gun, which was answered by the rebels, but their 68-pounder burst at the third fire.

The *Harriet Lane* ran into the *Bayou City*, carrying away her wheel-guard, passed her, and gave her a broadside, which did her little or no damage. The other rebel steamer then ran into the *Harriet Lane*, but was so disabled by the collision that she was soon afterward obliged to back in the flats, where she sank in about eight feet of water, near to the scene of action. The *Bayou City* turned and ran into the *Harriet Lane*, and she remained secured to her by catching under her guard, pouring in incessant volleys of musketry, as did also the other steamer, which was returned by the *Harriet Lane* with musketry. This drove the *Harriet Lane*'s men from her guns, and probably wounded Commander Wainwright and Lieutenant-Commander Lee, the latter mortally. She was then carried by boarding, by the *Bayou City*, her commander summoned to surrender, which he refused, gallantly defending himself with his revolver until killed. But five of the *Harriet Lane*'s men were killed and five wounded; one hundred and ten, exclusive of officers and wounded, were landed on shore, prisoners. Her commander and first lieutenant were buried on the following day on shore, in the cemetery, with the honors of war, and her other officers paroled. The *Owasco*, which had been anchored below the town, coaling, the night before, got under way, moved up at the commencement of the attack, and engaged the enemy's artillery on shore. When it was light enough for her to observe that there were two rebel steamers alongside the *Harriet Lane*, she moved up to her assistance, grounding several times in so doing (owing to the narrowness of the channel). She could only occasionally bring her 11-inch gun to bear. She was soon driven back by the incessant fire of the enemy's musketry, and when the howitzers of the *Harriet Lane* opened on her, she concluded she had been captured and backed down below the *Sachem* and *Corypheus*, continuing her engagement with the enemy on shore. She had all her rifle-gun crew wounded when above, and lost in all one man killed and fifteen wounded. The *Clifton*, before the action commenced, went around into Bolivar Channel, to render assistance to the *Westfield*, who had got under way when the rebel steamers were first discovered. Soon afterward got hard and fast ashore, at high water, and then made a signal for assistance. While the *Clifton* was in the act of rendering this assistance the flashes of the enemy's guns were first seen in the town. Commander Renshaw then directed Lieutenant-Commander Law to leave him and to return to the town.



The moon had now gone down, and it became quite dark, yet the Clifton with some difficulty got around into the other channel, opening the batteries upon Fort Point, which the rebels now had possession of, shelling them out, and driving them up the beach as she neared the town. Here she anchored and continued the engagement, but did not proceed up to the rescue of the Harriet Lane, owing to the failure of the Owasco, the intricacy of the channel, and the apprehension of killing the crew of the Harriet Lane, who were then exposed by the rebels on her upper deck. It was now about 7.30 P. M. A white flag was hoisted on the Harriet Lane. A boat bearing a flag of truce, with a rebel officer and an acting master of the Harriet Lane, came down to the Clifton, informing her commander of the capture of the Harriet Lane, the death of her commander and first lieutenant, and the killing and wounding of two-thirds of her crew, all of which was corroborated by the acting master.

Major Smith, their commander, now proposed that our vessels should all surrender, and that one should be allowed, with the crews of all, to leave the harbor; otherwise, they would proceed down with the Harriet Lane and all their steamers (three more of which had appeared in sight after daylight, but were neither armed nor barricaded), and proceed to capture the gunboats in line.

Lieutenant-Commander Law replied that he was not the commanding officer, and he could not imagine that such terms could be accepted; but that he would take the acting master of the Harriet Lane and proceed over to the Westfield, and tender his proposal to Commander Renshaw. This he did, and went in his own boat. Flags of truce were at this time flying on our vessels, and by the parties on shore. During the absence of Lieutenant-Commander Law, and under these flags of truce, the rebels coolly made prisoners of our troops on shore, got more of their artillery into position, and towed the Harriet Lane alongside the wharf, though it had been understood that every thing should remain in *statu quo* until an answer should have been received. Commander Renshaw refused to accede to the proposition, directed Lieutenant-Commander Law to return and get all the vessels out of port as soon as possible, and as he found he could not get the Westfield afloat, he should blow her up and go on board the army transports Saxon and M. A. Boardman, which were lying near him, with his officers and crew.

Upon Lieutenant-Commander Law's return to his vessel, he proceeded to carry out these directions. The flags of truce were hauled down, the enemy firing upon the vessels as we then left the harbor.

When the Clifton was half-way toward the bar, her commander was

informed by a boat from the Westfield, that in the explosion of that vessel, which they observed some half hour before, Commander Renshaw, Lieutenant Zimmerman, Engineer Green, and some ten or fifteen of the crew, had perished (the explosion being premature). Lieutenant-Commander Law now being commanding officer, proceeded to cross his vessels over the bar, and finally concluded to abandon the blockade altogether, considering the Owasco as his only efficient vessel, and regarding her as not equal to resist an attack from the Harriet Lane, should she come out for that purpose. By 8 p. m. they had all left the blockade, although the commander of the Clifton had been notified by an officer on board the M. A. Boardman that another transport would be down within forty-eight hours, and requested that he would warn her off.

The vessels which were left in possession of the enemy were the Harriet Lane and two coal-barks, the Cavallo and Elias Pike. The only injury sustained by the Harriet Lane appears to have been from an 11-inch shell under her counter, fired by the Owasco, and the damage to her guard from the collision.

Very respectfully,

JAMES S. PALMER, *Captain.*

MELANCTON SMITH, *Captain.*

L. A. KIMBERLY, *Lieutenant-commanding.*

*Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT, commanding W. G. B. Squadron.*

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, NEW ORLEANS, *January 29, 1868.*

SIR: I herewith enclose the report of Acting-Master J. A. Hannum, of the Harriet Lane, by which you will perceive the exaggerations which have been circulated concerning the defence of that vessel; also, the pusillanimous conduct of the officer who accompanied the flag of truce, and corroborated to Lieutenant-Commander Law the enemy's statement, that all the officers and crew of the Harriet Lane had perished save some ten or fifteen persons; whereas, there were scarcely that number of killed and wounded. I take it for granted that of the nine slightly wounded, the greater part amounted to nothing, so that the testimony of the rebel pilot was very near the truth when he said five killed and six or eight wounded.

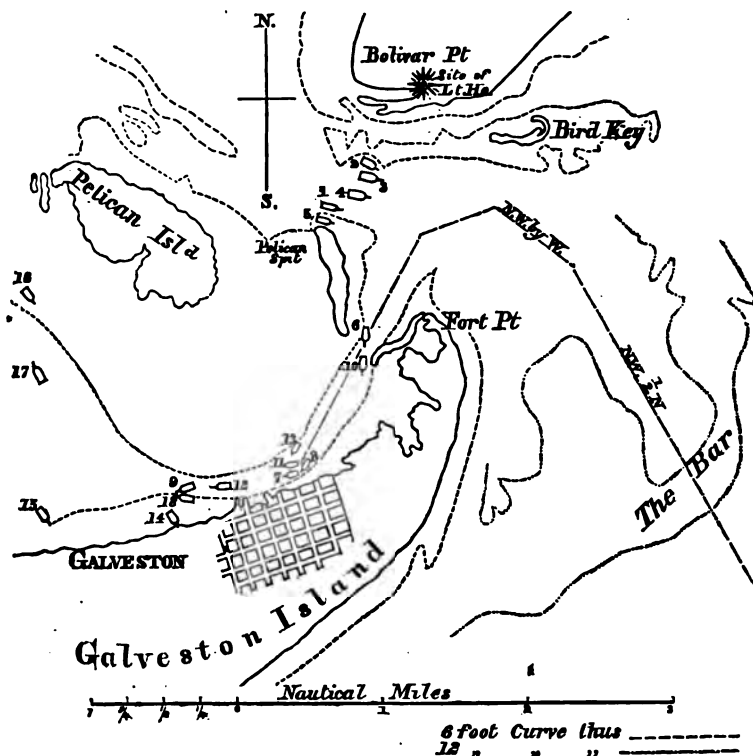
I cannot think but that for the death of Commander Wainwright and Lieutenant-Commanding Lee, the vessel would not have been captured. It is difficult, however, to conceive a more pusillanimous surrender of a vessel to an enemy already in our power than occurred in the case of the Harriet Lane.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy.*

## ATTACK ON FEDERAL FLEET AT GALVESTON, JANUARY 1, 1863.



## REFERENCES.

- 1 United States steamer Westfield aground, where she blew up.
- 2 Transport-steamer Saxon.
- 3 Steamer with commissary stores for the Army.
- 4 United States schooner Velocity.
- 5 Coal-bark Elias Pike.
- 6 Coal-bark Cavallo.
- 7 United States steamer Sachem.
- 8 United States schooner Corypheus.
- 9 United States steamer Harriet Lane during the engagement.
- 10 United States gunboat Owasco anchored, on seeing signal, "Enemy on shore."
- 11 United States gunboat Owasco, while engaging shore batteries and after firing into steamers, and after capture of the Harriet Lane.
- 12 United States gunboat Owasco engaging shore batteries and rebel steamers.
- 13 United States steamer Clifton came and anchored after capture of the Harriet Lane.
- 14 } Enemy's steamers, when first seen and while engaging the Harriet Lane when
- 15 } aground, etc.
- 16 }
- 17 }
- 18 }

This humiliating disaster at Galveston was quickly followed by another, which gave the country the first actual proof of the fighting power of the famous Alabama. It was, however, a blow which carried with it no stain for the honor of the Navy. When Admiral Farragut heard of the capture of Galveston, he made immediate preparations to retrieve the disaster, and ordered at once the Brooklyn and six gunboats on this service. Up to the 11th of January only a part of these had reached their destination. In the afternoon of that day a strange sail was reported from the masthead of the Brooklyn, and the steamer Hatteras was sent in chase. The Hatteras was a merchant-steamer, and neither by her build, her strength, her speed, or her armament, was she fitted to engage a regular man-of-war. The heaviest guns she carried were short 32-pounders, and she had two 30-pounder Parrott rifles, one 20-pounder rifle, and one howitzer. She mounted, in all, eight guns. Her machinery was exposed, and her frame was too slight to endure the explosion of heavy shells. She started in pursuit of the stranger at 3 o'clock p. m. She seemed anxious to escape the Hatteras until about half-past 6, when, as the Hatteras was evidently gaining on her, though herself very slow, her commander began to suspect deception. In a short time, as the two vessels neared each other, the commander of the Hatteras, from various circumstances, was satisfied that he was about to meet the Alabama, and therefore cleared his ship for action. When about four miles distant, the Alabama shut off steam and lay broadside on, awaiting the Hatteras. It was dark before the vessels came within hailing distance, and then the answer from the Alabama was, "Her Britannic majesty's ship Vixen." Captain Blake replied that he would send a boat on board, and immediately gave the order. The boat had barely left the side of the ship when a voice from the stranger cried out, "We are the Confederate steamer Alabama," and this was accompanied by a broadside which, at the distance of seventy-five yards, was at once returned by the Hatteras. Captain Blake saw that his only chance, considering his light armament, and the weakness of the frame of his ship, was to close with the Alabama and attempt to carry her by boarding. But his adversary saw that he had the Hatteras completely in his power, and decided

to fight a safe battle. The superior speed of the Alabama enabled her to keep the Hatteras at a distance, and thus, with her heavy guns, she easily, and in less than half an hour, tore her frail hull in pieces. The action was continued at a distance of but thirty yards; muskets and pistols were freely used, as well as the large guns, and the firing was maintained with great vigor on both sides. So soon as the flashes of the guns were seen, some sixteen miles distant, as was supposed, the Brooklyn, Cayuga, and Scioto started in the direction of the battle, but the doomed Hatteras was at the bottom of the ocean long before they reached the spot, and the Alabama was gone.

A few minutes after the action began, a shell entered the hold amidships, setting the vessel on fire; at the same moment another passed through the sick-bay, also setting the ship on fire; and then another entered the cylinder, filling the vessel with steam, and depriving Captain Blake of all power to manœuvre his vessel; and yet he fought bravely on. His ship lay a wreck upon the water, his walking-beam shot away, unable even to work a pump to extinguish the fire raging in two places, he still continued the hopeless fight, deeming it barely possible that he might disable his adversary or bring help from Galveston. But the heavy shells of the Alabama were rapidly doing the same work for the Hatteras that the Kearsarge afterward did for her—they were crushing her into a mass of rubbish. After having thus set her on fire and destroyed her motive-power, the Alabama, with fatal precision, sent several shells through the Hatteras at the water-line, and she began to sink rapidly. She then took up a position where Captain Blake, in his crippled condition, could bring no guns to bear, and was preparing to rake the helpless steamer, when, to save the crew, the Hatteras was surrendered. To prevent her blowing up, the magazine was flooded, and a lee gun was fired. The Alabama then proffered assistance, as the Hatteras was rapidly going down. To keep her afloat until the crew could be saved, Captain Blake threw overboard his armament on one side, and had he not done so, the steamer would have carried her crew down with her. As it was, every living being was saved.

In this brief battle there seems to have been nothing discreditable to either party. It was mortifying to our pride to

have the Alabama come boldly upon the coast, and, almost in sight of our fleet at Galveston, sink in a few minutes a ship whose tonnage was equal to her own; and the exploit added not a little to her reputation, as it was the first time she had encountered one of our armed ships. Those unacquainted with the facts shook their heads, and prophesied future misfortunes; but those officers who knew the build and armament, both of the Alabama and the Hatteras, were not alarmed at the result of the battle, and predicted truly what the fate of the rebel cruiser would be whenever she should meet one of the regular vessels of our Navy of her own size.

For all purposes of defence the Hatteras was an unwieldy shell, with an armament totally unfit to cope with that of the Alabama; but Captain Blake fought his ship in the darkness most gallantly, and only surrendering when it would have been a crime to continue the battle, he saved the honor of his flag, while his vessel was unavoidably lost.

The captain of the Alabama used his superior powers with skill and terrible effect, demolishing his adversary with only fifteen or twenty minutes' firing, and then giving all needed assistance and supplying freely medicines for the wounded. The armament of the Alabama was seven guns, four long 32-pounders, one 100-pounder rifle, one 68-pounder, and one 24-pounder rifle. To such guns the Hatteras was nearly as vulnerable as if she had been built of paper. The Alabama went on her way in triumph, only to meet a similar fate from the Kearsarge, under circumstances truly and deeply mortifying, not only to her commander, but to his many European friends.

On the 14th of January, there was a sharp and somewhat disastrous skirmish at Bayou Teche. The rebels had placed obstructions in that river, had planted some batteries there, and had also brought to that point an iron-plated steamer, the Cotton. A joint expedition of land and naval forces against this point was undertaken; the land forces, under General Weitzel, starting from Brashear City, accompanied by the steamers Calhoun and Kinsman. They found the steamer Cotton lying above the obstructions, so that she could not be reached by our vessels, while the obstructions themselves were guarded by the batteries.

After an engagement of about two hours, the rebels were driven from their positions, and a lodgment for our troops was gained by the barrier. In this engagement we lost one of our most gallant and valiant young officers—Lieutenant McKean Buchanan. His death was the consequence of a brave but rash exposure of himself in front of the rifle-pits, where he was shot through the head by a rifle-ball. The land forces lost in this skirmish were four killed and fifteen wounded, and the two steamers three killed and seven wounded. The rebels had also been making preparations for an attack from Sabine Pass, off which place the large ship *Morning Light* and the small schooner *Velocity* were lying. They fitted out two "*cotton-plated*" steamers, and on a calm morning ran out, and easily and with no loss captured and destroyed the *Morning Light* and took the *Velocity* into port. Lieutenant Read gives the following account of this affair :

UNITED STATES STEAMER NEW LONDON, }  
OFF SABINE PASS, *January 26, 1863.* }

SIR : On the morning of the 23d instant I was ordered, in company with the gunboat *Cayuga*, to proceed with all possible dispatch to Sabine Pass, Commodore Bell having received information that the ship *Morning Light* and schooners *Rachel Seaman* and *Velocity*, blockading there, had been captured by the rebels. We got under way about day-break. At half past 12 M. on the 23d we discovered the *Morning Light*, and soon after saw a steamboat leave her and stand into the pass. Simultaneous with the departure of the steamboat saw a dense smoke rising from the ship.

I ordered the *Cayuga*, being the fastest vessel, to go ahead with all speed and save the *Morning Light*, if possible. On our nearer approach we discovered that her sails were loosed, jibs up, the ship before the wind and heading toward the pass, and in flames fore and aft as high as the foretop. At twenty-five minutes before three, the mizzenmast and maintopmast fell over the side. At 3 P. M. arrived near the burning wreck, sent a boat to make examination, and found it utterly impossible to do any thing to save the *Morning Light*. The fire was started in the after-part of the ship. The enemy towed her into ten feet of water, perhaps with the hope of getting her over the bar into the pass.

Four of her guns were discharged by the heat, three on the port side and one on the starboard side, the latter having fallen into the hold, and the shot coming out just above her copper, our boat being near at

the time. Two of her shells exploded. The enemy had undoubtedly removed the powder from the magazine, as no explosion took place except the guns and shell. I do not think the enemy took any of her guns, as we saw seven, and the eighth may have fallen into the hold, as the deck was much caved in when our boat reached her.

The wreck of the *Morning Light*, showing nothing but her stern and sternposts, and a large iron water-tank nearly amidships, now lies in ten feet water, on the outer edge of the bar, bearing from the light-house northwest, distant about four miles. Her bower anchor and chains can be got; also a large anchor, showing the ring awash about the fore hatch. We saved one top-gallantsail and one royal, also a top-gallant and royal yard. Nearly all her spars are so charred or burned so badly as to be useless. All that can be, I will have saved. Four of her boats which we saw were stove.

As to the schooners *Rachel Seaman* and *Velocity*, the former, I learned, had escaped; the latter was captured with the *Morning Light*.

On Friday, the 23d, I saw four steamboats lying at Sabine City, and on Saturday, the 24th, six; two of them, as I have learned, are barricaded with cotton, and mount three guns each, one a 60-pounder. The pilot who accompanied us, and who has considerable knowledge of this place, informs me that there are five steamboats in Sabine River, and one sea-going steamer. My intention was to cross the bar and go up to Sabine City, and, if possible, destroy the enemy's steamboats or other vessels they may have in their possession, but on Saturday morning I sounded the bar in company with the pilot, and did not find water sufficient to cross. I will watch the tide, and make another attempt to go over, and, if possible, accomplish my object.

At Sabine City the rebels have two companies of cavalry of eighty men each, and two companies of infantry of about one hundred men each.

Captain Childs, of the Tennessee, by whom I send this dispatch, will inform you of some items of personal interest.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. READ, *Lieutenant-commanding*.

Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT,

*commanding W. G. B. Squadron, Flag-ship Hartford.*

Upon this account Admiral Farragut makes this comment to the Secretary:

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, NEW ORLEANS, *January 29, 1863.*

SIR: I have received dispatches from Commodore Bell and Lieutenant-Commander Read, on the coast of Texas, extracts and copies of



which I herewith enclose, by which you will see that our disasters on that coast are not yet ended.

As I had already anticipated, it appears that the enemy came out of Sabine Pass with two cotton-fortified steamers, on a calm morning, and ran out to sea some twelve or fourteen miles to where the Morning Light was; the latter soon got under way, but by the rebel account (and we have no other) they gave chase, soon came up with and captured her, without losing a man. The same course of non-resistance appears to have been pursued by the officers and crew of that vessel as was pursued by those of the Westfield and Harriet Lane. The schooner Velocity was soon made also to surrender, and was taken into port.

I am very thankful that they did not get the guns of the Morning Light, as it would have enabled them to erect a battery of great strength in such a shallow pass.

You will notice that the guns of the Morning Light were loaded, and went off when they became heated, by which circumstance I judge the men did not even fire their last charge, but surrendered without a struggle.

I am pleased to see, by Commodore Bell's report, that the Harriet Lane is still in Galveston harbor, although they have tried to impress us with the idea that she had run out during the last gale, which is now known not to be the case.

All of which is respectfully submitted, by your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

HON. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy*.

P. S.—I have just learned that the Morning Light was captured in a dead calm by the steamer coming up astern of her.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

It appears from a former letter of the admiral that the Secretary had requested him to be cautious about giving opinions of the conduct of officers, but nothing annoyed and disgusted him so much as even the appearance of any want of pluck; and here, as in the case of the surrender of Galveston, he could not refrain from a slight outburst of honest indignation, such as a man might be expected to feel in such a case, who had once stood with Porter on the bloody deck of the Essex.

The somewhat amusing condition of things on that coast at

the time may be seen from the fact that the rebel General Magruder, after our vessels had retreated from Galveston, and after the capture of the *Morning Light* at Sabine Pass, issued three proclamations, informing the world that Galveston, Sabine Pass, and Velasco were open to the free trade of all nations. This was met by a counter-proclamation from Commodore Bell, declaring that Galveston, Sabine Pass, and indeed the whole coast of Texas, were blockaded by a sufficient force, and any vessel attempting to pass in or out, "on any pretext whatever," would be instantly captured. In the mean time Commodore Bell writes the following rather private letter to Admiral Farragut:

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP BROOKLYN, OFF GALVESTON, *January 31, 1863.*

SIR: I send Midshipman H. T. Grafton in charge of my dispatches by the brigantine *Young America*.

You will please observe, by the pointed proclamations which I enclose herewith, that General Magruder makes a great point of his having temporarily raised the blockade of this port and Sabine Pass; that he also claims to have driven off our force from Lavaca and broken the blockade there; also that Velasco is not blockaded.

You are already in possession of all the facts connected with the restoration of the blockade of this port and Sabine Pass, and know how far it is perfect.

It is not true that he drove off the force from Lavaca. The schooner *Kittatinny*, blockading that port, appeared off here on the morning of the 23d, bound for Pensacola, and I ordered her back immediately; to resume the blockade there until she shall be relieved.

Acting-Master Lamson, commanding, informed me that there was only one steamboat in those waters—an old iron boat.

The port of Velasco is forty miles distant from this, and is not blockaded, as the proclamation states, on account of a want of vessels, the *Arthur* being on duty off Aransas. Lieutenant-Commander Read having reported six steamers to be in preparation at Sabine Pass to attack him, I sent the *Katahdin* to him, on the 29th, for two or three days. The *New London* and *Cayuga* should sustain the attack of any force which the enemy could send out from Sabine.

The transactions on the coast since the 1st instant make it apparent that sailing vessels alone cannot maintain their position off a blockaded port having steamers. They may serve for cruising off the coast after

sailing vessels running the blockade; but lying to an anchor off a port only subjects them to capture. Therefore the blockade of these ports can be made effective by steamers only; in fact, we can make no show without them.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. H. BELL, *Commodore.*

*Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT,*

*comd'g W. G. B. Squadron, U. S. Ship Hartford, New Orleans, La.*

Still another disaster overtook Farragut's fleet on the 23d of February. In transporting a detachment of troops in Berwick Bay, the gunboat *Kinsman* was snagged, and in spite of all efforts to save her, and although run on the bank, she settled by the stern, slid off the bank, and disappeared, a total loss. The crew were all saved; but they had no chance to secure even their clothing. At this time the tide seemed to set in favor of the rebels. The ports of Texas were recovered; we had lost several of our vessels; and the *Mississippi*, from New Orleans to Vicksburg, was more strongly fortified than ever.

It was quite evident that very serious work was on hand. Galveston was not recaptured, and the *Harriet Lane* could not be heard from.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### OPERATIONS ON THE MISSISSIPPI BETWEEN NEW ORLEANS AND VICKSBURG.—FIGHT WITH THE BATTERIES AT PORT HUDSON.

IN the spring of 1863, the Government made preparations, on a large scale and in an efficient manner, to obtain complete and permanent control of the Mississippi and its tributaries. Baton Rouge was occupied by our troops; General Banks invested Port Hudson; General Grant took command at Vicksburg; Admiral D. D. Porter was assigned to the Mississippi squadron above Vicksburg; while Farragut with his fleet was below Port Hudson, ready to coöperate with the army. No one of the most important purposes had yet been gained for which the expeditions for the recovery of the Mississippi had been projected. Noble and successful work had been done on the upper portion of the river and its tributaries, by Foote and Davis, a way had been opened for our armies into Tennessee, the northward advance of the rebels had been effectually checked, the river-gates were forced open down to Vicksburg, and the rebel fleet above had been mostly destroyed. Below, the great battle of the forts had been gloriously fought, and New Orleans was restored to the Union. Still, the two most important things remained yet undone. The Western commerce was yet shut out from the sea, and the long reach of the river between Vicksburg and Port Hudson was one wide ferry for the crossing of rebel supplies. To obtain control of this portion of the Mississippi, and, by consequence, of Red River, was absolutely necessary to insure the triumph of the Union cause. A movement by Admiral Farragut became more important, by the capture of the Queen of the West and the

Indianola, that had been sent down from above Vicksburg by Admiral Porter.

It was the intention of Admiral Farragut to take a portion of his fleet above Port Hudson, in order to cut off these rebel supplies, early in January. But the disasters at Galveston and Sabine Pass, and the increase of the rebel force at Mobile, interfered with his plan; and it was not until the middle of March that he was ready to move. The fleet which he prepared was a formidable one, and from his former experience he had good reason to anticipate success. The squadron consisted of his renowned Hartford, the Mississippi, the Richmond, and the Monongahela, the iron-clad Essex (from Porter's fleet, that had run below in attacking the Arkansas while she lay at Vicksburg), the Genesee, the Kineo, the Albatross, and the Sachem. Four of these were large and powerful ships, carrying heavy batteries; the Essex mounted large guns, and though not invulnerable, her armor was a valuable shield; the Genesee, Kineo, and Albatross were gunboats, and the Sachem a small, light-draught steamer. Four of the mortar-schooners were also there.

With such a force, on former occasions, he had passed the batteries at Vicksburg even, without serious damage, and had gone up and down the river at his pleasure, receiving, it is true, some injury whenever he ran the gantlet of the rebel guns, but showing, nevertheless, that it could be done without the destruction of his ships. He was not, then, from his experience in the past, fully prepared for his partial failure in the spring of 1863. He depended somewhat, also, upon the army, as General Banks, then at Baton Rouge, had proposed to make an assault upon the rebel works, and thus produce a diversion in his favor.

The time for this attack was fixed for the 14th of March, and the following is the "General Order:"

*General Order for passing Port Hudson, Mississippi.*

UNITED STATES FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, 1863.

The ships will each take a gunboat on her port side, and secure her as well aft as possible, so as to leave the port battery clear for the enemy's battery on the port side of the river going up after we round the point opposite Port Hudson.

Each ship will keep a very little on the starboard quarter of her next ahead, so as to give free range to her chase guns, without risk of damage from premature explosion of shrapnel or shell.

The captains will bear in mind that the object is to run the batteries at the least possible damage to our ships, and thereby secure an efficient force above for the purpose of rendering such assistance as may be required of us by the army at Vicksburg, or, if not required there, to our army at Baton Rouge.

If they succeed in getting past the batteries, the gunboats will proceed up to the mouth of Red River, and keep up police of the river batteries between that river and Port Hudson, capturing every thing they can. Should any vessel be disabled so that she is unable to pass Port Hudson, she will use the gunboat to the best advantage. If the captain thinks he can get by, try it; if he thinks not, let the gunboat drop her down below the range of the batteries. If both are disabled, then club down with a light anchor, or use the sails as in his judgment may seem best, but I expect all to go by who are able; and I think the best protection against the enemy's fire is a well-directed fire from our own guns, shell and shrapnel at a distance, and grape when within 400 or 500 yards.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral.*

*Memorandum for Commanding Officers, to accompany General Order for passing the Batteries.*

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, BELOW PORT HUDSON, March 13, 1863.

SIGNALS.

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|---|--|
| 1. To get under way.  | { (2) Two red lantern lights hung over the stern.  |
| 2. Answer to No. 1. One red lantern light hung over the bow.  | { When under way, exhibit (1) one red lantern light over the bow.  |
| 3. "Disabled I am." Two perpendicular white lantern lights to be shown where best seen.   | { If disabled, drop out of line to port, and display where they can be best seen two perpendicular white light lanterns.         |
| 4. Discontinue the action and drop down the river. Coston light No. "4," all red.   | { If the admiral wishes to discontinue the action and drop down the river, one Coston light No. "4," all red, will be burnt aft. |
| 5. Special attention must be given to the steamers lying at Port Hudson. Shell them with the hope of setting the cotton on fire and destroying the boats. |  |
| 6. Whoever is so fortunate as to get through will proceed to carry  |  |

out the views contained in the general order—that is, stop the communication between Red River and the rebels on the eastern banks of the Mississippi river, and communicate with the fleet and army above; and if their services are not required to assist in reducing Vicksburg, return to the mouth of Red River, and keep up the blockade until the want of provisions and coal makes it necessary to return to Baton Rouge. Nurse your coal with all possible care.

7. Supplies of provisions and coal may probably be obtained from the fleet and army above; failing to obtain them there, the army below Port Hudson may find means of conveying them across the peninsula or point opposite Port Hudson. So long as supplies can be obtained, the vessels above Port Hudson will remain there.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

*Passage of Port Hudson.*

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, OFF MOUTH OF RED RIVER, March 16, 1863.

SIR: It becomes my duty again to report disaster to my fleet, although I know neither the extent nor the attendant circumstances; I shall therefore confine my report to those facts which came under my own personal observation.

On the morning of the 13th instant, off Baton Rouge, I inspected the ships of my command to see that all the proper arrangements had been made for battle, &c., and I am happy to say found every thing well arranged, and the ships well prepared in every respect. My general order (A) had been previously written, and delivered to each commanding officer for his guidance in passing Fort Hudson. I had had a consultation with General Banks in the morning, and he informed me that he was ready to move against Port Hudson immediately, and make a diversion in my favor, and attack the place if he found it practicable, &c. At 4 P. M. I signalized to the fleet to get under way, and we proceeded up the river to near Profit's Island. Early the next morning (14th) we proceeded on up to the head of Profit's Island, where we found the Essex and the mortar-boats all lying ready for their work. I called all the commanders on board of this ship, and consulted Commander Caldwell as to the batteries, his information connected with the place, and the character of the steamers we saw above (they were five in number, two cotton rams for boarding our gunboats and the others river steamers, transports, etc.). I also directed the mortar-boats to commence firing, in order to get their ranges, which they did, but finding the distance too great, I directed them to move half a mile nearer. We conversed freely as to the arrangements, and I found that all my instructions were well

understood, and, I believe, concurred in by all. The gunboats were assigned to the ships according to their speed, giving the Richmond—she being the slowest ship—the Genesee, she being the most powerful and fastest gunboat. . . . . D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

Port Hudson is situated at one of those short curves which are so frequent in the Mississippi, and where the stream sweeps around the point the current is very strong, scarcely to be stemmed by the most powerful steamer. Here the heaviest batteries of the rebels were placed, where the stream would almost inevitably force the ships out of their course and directly under the guns. It was very difficult, almost impossible, for the ships in the night to keep the channel below the point, and the danger of running aground was far greater than that from the batteries alone. The rebels had strengthened their works to the utmost, and, considering all the circumstances, the attempt to pass these batteries was a more perilous one than the attack on the forts below New Orleans.

The mortar-vessels were placed in position below, and the Essex was stationed where she was able to enfilade the batteries during the passage of the ships. The Hartford, the Richmond, and the Monongahela had each a gunboat lashed to the port quarter, so as to render assistance should the ship be disabled. There was none assigned to the Mississippi, as she was a side-wheel steamer, and it was more difficult for her than for the others to attach a gunboat properly to her side, and besides there were but three in all.

The Hartford took the Albatross, the Richmond had the Genesee, and the Monongahela the Kineo. As soon as it was dark the gunboats were taken to their places, and all the usual and sad preparations for a battle were made. At 9 p. m. the signal was made "to weigh." For some reason, however, this order was not instantly obeyed, and it was past 10 before the fleet was in motion. Of course, these preparations could not be made unnoticed by the rebels, and they were accordingly ready to receive them; and at about 11 o'clock the nearest battery opened its fire upon the Hartford, the leading ship. This was the signal agreed upon for the mortar-schooners and the Essex to begin their work, and at once shells from the heavy guns of the Essex



and bombs from the 13-inch mortars went crashing into the rebel works. By this means the danger from the lower batteries was somewhat diminished, and their fire was more irregular and weak than that of those at the point which the mortars could not reach.

The Hartford pressed steadily and gallantly on as usual, delivering her fire with deliberation, in order to make it effectual. The rebels had kindled their signal-fires at all points, and they served at first to light up the river and its banks; but soon the heavy cloud of battle settled over all, and, as usual in these night attacks, the gunners had little to guide them but the flashes of the guns. The smoke was often so dense that nothing could be seen ahead or on either shore, and then the firing was stopped until it drifted away, or until flashes from some battery served to direct the aim. A very happy and effectual device was adopted on board the Hartford for steering the ship. An acoustic tube was run from the wheel to the mizzen-top, and there the pilot was stationed; and, as much of the time he was at that height able to see above the smoke, he could direct the vessel's course, even when nothing could be seen from the deck. At the same time, as the batteries fired high, he was greatly exposed; shot, shell, and grape, whistling every moment through the rigging around him. His position aided him much in saving the vessel.

From far below, where the mortars were thundering to where the Hartford was endeavoring to round the point, the river was red with the glare of the guns of the squadron, and on shore there was an answering line of intermitting light from the batteries, and yet little could be seen. Every thing was shrouded by a dense though fitfully-luminous cloud. From both shores volleys of musketry were poured into the ships, and the loss of life from this fire would have been great, had not every precaution been taken. Barricades of hammocks and sails around the poop and wheel and top-gallant fore-castle, and wherever else they were available, saved many a valuable life, while the splinter-nettings were also a great protection to the men. The fire from the batteries was said to be more terrible than that at the New Orleans forts. This was the opinion of brave officers who were in both these battles.

The Hartford pressed steadily forward, receiving some ugly wounds in her hull and spars, and being rapidly cut up in her rigging, yet not seriously endangered until she reached the sharp bend by the upper batteries. Here she was suddenly caught by the swift current sweeping round the point which swung her round out of her course toward the earthworks, and she was drifting down upon the batteries. It was a moment of extreme anxiety and peril, and a minute or two would evidently decide the fate of the ship; for she was getting broad-side to the current, and the Albatross lashed to her side rendered her unwieldy. But those who guided the Hartford were equal even to this emergency, and the only expedient probably which could have saved her, was on the instant adopted. The gunboat was lashed to her port-quarter, and the current swept the head of the Hartford round to the right and down the stream until she struck the bank. The Albatross was strongly backed, the engines of the Hartford were driven with all their power ahead, the Albatross dragged her stern around, and she turned as on a central pivot, her bow swinging slowly to the left, till, once more pointed up-stream, she gathered headway, stemmed the strong current, and passed on with her usual speed and steadiness. It was the narrowest escape yet made by the Hartford, and her safety was owing largely to the excellent officers of the ship; and the admiral, in his letter to the Secretary, expresses his obligations to his assistants in the warmest manner. He mentions in this dispatch his fleet-captain, now Commodore Thornton A. Jenkins, as standing by his side and rendering efficient aid; he speaks in high terms of his pilots, one of whom passed the Vicksburg batteries with him on a previous occasion; he mentions by name Mr. Gabaudon, his secretary; Mr. Farragut, his signal-officer, and Mr. Palmer, the clerk of Captain Jenkins, leaving to Captain Palmer to mention the officers of the ship.

After rounding the point, Farragut looked in vain for his other ships. Not one had followed him. There was no method of communicating, for between them lay the long line of rebel batteries. He soon saw enough to excite his worst fears, a bright light arising evidently from one of his burning vessels apparently aground, and not another ship in sight. Soon he

saw the burning vessel drifting down the stream, her guns going off with the heat, and then she blew up with an explosion that shook for miles around both land and water. The firing ceased below, and the Hartford and her gunboat were alone above the batteries.

The admiral had done his share of the terrible work, bravely and well. With little loss to his crew, and with no serious injury to his vessel, though she was struck by heavy shells, and somewhat shattered in places, he had once more proved that strong forts on land can be passed by wooden ships; but the main purpose of the attack was not attained. He had not carried above the batteries a sufficient force to establish a river police between Port Hudson and Vicksburg. He was shut in between these two places with only his own ship and a gunboat, cut off in both directions from assistance and supplies. It was not a very gratifying condition of things.

As is usual in cases when the expected success is not attained, the public was disposed to look around for some one upon whom to lay the blame. Some were inclined to censure Farragut for having needlessly or recklessly placed his ships in peril. The censure was wholly undeserved. He knew how earnestly the Navy Department, and indeed the War Department as well, desired to have the Mississippi thoroughly and permanently opened; and the spirit of his orders constrained him to make every reasonable effort to accomplish this important work. From what he had done before, and often, he had good reason to believe that his fleet would go safely through; and he knew that, if successful, he and Porter above Vicksburg would have the control of the Western rivers, although even then the great stream would be closed to commerce by the gates of Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

Under these circumstances, he doubtless would have been censured by the Navy Department, and the country also, if he had remained inactive below. The failure was caused by some of those common casualties of a fight which cannot be foreseen, and against which provision cannot be made. Some were disposed to blame those who did not follow their bold leader through that gorge of fire. Those who did so underrated both the difficulties of the passage itself, in the darkness, and

the severity of the rebel fire. In order to show that this is true, the attention of the reader is directed to some of the main events on board of the principal vessels which failed to go through.

#### THE RICHMOND.

The Richmond's position in the line was next to the flag-ship, and, like the Hartford, she had a gunboat (the Genesee) lashed to her port-quarter. She is one of our large sloops, of about two thousand tons burden, and mounting twenty-two guns, the main battery being 9-inch Dahlgrens. Like the Hartford, she is a screw-steamer, with her machinery protected, so far as it can be in a wooden ship. She was commanded by a man whose bravery and skill have never been questioned—Commander James Alden; and he bears the highest possible testimony to the character and efficiency of his assistant officers and the noble conduct of his crew. It was not owing to any deficiency in the officers or men that the Richmond was compelled to return. She took her position second in the line, and started with the Hartford at the appointed signal. She followed her leader steadily, engaging the batteries with her starboard guns, and receiving a fire from musketry on the west bank, which the Genesee returned with her port broadside; and though somewhat cut up by the enemy's shot, her injuries were no greater than had been anticipated, until she reached the "*turning-point*," when, just as she was engaging the last battery, at twenty minutes after twelve o'clock, a 6-inch solid rifle-shot came through the side of the ship, struck and upset the safety-valve seat, by which the ship was filled with steam, though not in a manner to scald the crew; but the pressure on the boilers was only nine pounds, and the power of the engine was so reduced, that, even with the aid of the Genesee, it was found impossible to stem the current. As she lay thus partially disabled, she was exposed to a very destructive cross-fire from the shore batteries, by which she was being rapidly cut up, and her men were being slaughtered, with no power on her part to do effective work. Just before this accident, the executive officer of the ship, Lieutenant Cummings, had been shot down with the loss of a leg, and a torpedo almost at the same moment was exploded

under the vessel's stern, throwing the water up thirty feet, bursting in the cabin-windows, but happily doing no essential injury. It was found, however, that the Richmond could not go on, and to remain where she was would only secure her speedy destruction. The shot were crashing through her, and sweeping her decks, the men were falling in every part of the ship; and reluctantly her brave commander gave the order to turn back; and, aided by the Genesee, he passed below, and anchored out of range. In such cases it seems to be the historian's duty to record the official evidence upon which his statements rest, that his work may be valuable, not merely as a narrative, but as an authentic history. For this reason official documents are presented:

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, BELOW PORT HUDSON, LA., *March 15, 1863.*

SIR: I have respectfully to report that our attempt to pass the batteries at Port Hudson last night, in company with the admiral and the other ships of the squadron, was frustrated by a shot striking the steam-pipe in the vicinity of the safety-valves, upsetting them both and letting off the steam. At the time this accident occurred we were in position, second in the line which the admiral was leading, and, with her, engaging the last battery. The *turning-point was gained*, but I soon found, even with the aid of the Genesee, which vessel was lashed alongside, that we could make no headway against the strong current of the river, and suffering much from a galling cross-fire of the enemy's batteries, I was compelled, though most reluctantly, to turn back, and by the aid of the Genesee soon anchored out of the range of their guns. My noble and gallant friend, Lieutenant-Commander Cummings, the executive officer of this ship, was shot down at my side just before this accident occurred, his leg being taken off below the knee by a cannon-shot while he was in the bravest manner cheering the men at the guns.

Enclosed I send you a list of casualties, and also reports of injuries done to the ship by the enemy's shot. To say, in the most emphatic manner, that *all* did their duty *nobly* and *well*, under the most trying circumstances that men could be placed in, is but a feeble tribute to their devotion and gallantry; for more than two hours they stood to their guns and replied in the steadiest manner to the most galling fire that I have ever witnessed, not excepting the memorable passage of Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Our difficulties in this action were heightened by the abrupt turn in the river, where the strongest of the enemy's batteries were placed, by the obscurity of the night, and the

humidity of the atmosphere, this last causing the smoke to settle around us so that we were frequently compelled to cease firing to find our way. Just before the accident to our steam-pipe a torpedo was exploded close under our stern, throwing the water up thirty feet, bursting in the cabin windows, and doing other unimportant injury.

Whereas I have said all did their duty so well, it would almost seem invidious to designate any by name. Of Lieutenant-Commander Cummings I have spoken elsewhere, and I trust he will be promoted immediately, as a slight token of his worth and bravery. Lieutenant Terry's service in this action can hardly be over-estimated. To his consummate coolness, which I have never seen excelled, together with a quick eye, the rescue of this vessel is, in a great measure, due. Captain Ramsay, who deserves special mention, in charge of the marine division of great guns, had nearly a whole gun's crew swept away by a single cannon-shot. Acting-Masters Gibbs and Wilson, together with Ensigns Swann and Haskins, fought their guns ably and well. Master's-Mate Cox, together with my clerk, Mr. Bogart, who acted as aide and signal-officer, deserve mention, too, for their promptness in carrying my orders. To Mr. Moore, our chief engineer, great credit is due for his management throughout the fight, and particularly after the accident to the safety-valve chest.

We shall have our injuries temporarily repaired by to-morrow, and be ready for any emergency that may arise. Before, however, we can be entirely efficient it will be necessary to have one new safety-valve and chest, all of which can be readily obtained at New Orleans.

With great respect, I am your obedient servant,

JAMES ALDEN, *Commander.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

#### REPORT OF DAMAGES AND INJURIES TO THE RICHMOND.

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, *March 15, 1863.*

SIR: I respectfully beg leave to report the damage received by this ship, in hull, etc.:

One shot struck front of cutwater, cutting away martingale-guy. One struck starboard bow, passed through between-decks. One came through No. 1 gun-port, on starboard side, starting forward transom of gun-carriage, burst, scarring the deck. One shot passed through starboard forward waist-boat, cutting off the gunwale on both sides. One shot cutting davit of starboard waist-boat nearly off, another cutting away the rudder and part of stern-post. One solid rifle-shot passed

through side, under No. 8 gun-port, through steam-pipe and smoke-pipe, breaking down the bulkhead. One shell struck under mainchains, cutting away two chain-plates, exploding in the side, tearing off ceiling, one piece of shell going through the barge. One shot cutting span main-topsail-yard in two, cutting off hammock-rail, shattering netting, passed across the deck, striking spanker-boom and pooprail, breaking awning-stanchion. One shell passed through side between 11 and 12 gun-port, exploding, scarring the deck, knocking away stanchion under poop, through bulkhead and captain's office. One shot in side, under starboard quarter. One inside on starboard bow, two feet above water-line. Two shots through port waist-boat. One through main masthead, six feet above the top, cutting away one-half of the strength of mast; another scarred foremasthead. The above received during the engagement at Port Hudson.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

H. L. DIXON, *Carpenter.*

JAMES ALDEN, Esq., *commanding U. S. Steamer Richmond.*

#### REPORT OF AMMUNITION EXPENDED BY THE RICHMOND.

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, BELOW PORT HUDSON, LA., *March 15, 1863.*

Report of number of rounds fired during the action of Saturday night, March 14, 1863 :

125 charges 9-inch, 10 lbs., or 1,250 lbs. powder. 7 charges 6-inch, 7 lbs., or 49 lbs. powder. 80-pounder rifle.

SHELL.—90 shells, 5 lbs., 9-inch. 25 stand of grape, 9-inch. 7 shell, 6-inch, for 80-pounder rifle, percussion.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES THAYER, *Gunner.*

*Commander JAMES ALDEN, Commanding U. S. Steamer Richmond.*

U. S. STEAMER RICHMOND, BELOW PORT HUDSON, *March 16, 1863.*

SIR : I respectfully report the following damages sustained by the machinery of this ship during the engagement with the rebel batteries at Port Hudson, on the night of the 14th instant :

About 12.20 a 6-inch rifle solid shot came through the starboard side of the ship, about four feet above the berth-deck, inclining downward; it passed through a barricade of clothes, bags, and hawsers, through bulkhead of steam-drum room, shattered the starboard safety-valve chamber, grazed the valve and seat, upsetting both, and letting off the steam in large volumes; it then passed through the smoke-pipe, about

five inches above the steam-drum, and taking an upward and forward course, struck the port safety-valve weight, forcing it through the steam-drum room bulkhead, twisting and bending the lever at right angles, and leaving the valve somewhat opened.

The escape of steam was so great as to reduce the pressure in the boilers almost immediately to nine pounds. Anticipating some such accident to this exposed portion of our machinery, lines were attached to the stop-valves, which enabled us to shut off the injured one without attempting an entrance to the steam-drum room, which, together with the berth-deck, was filled with steam; fires were then hauled from the furnaces of the starboard boiler.

The steam so filled the fire-room that it was with the greatest exertions on the part of the firemen that the fires were hauled. The men were obliged to relieve each other every two or three minutes, in which time they would become completely exhausted from the effects of steam and the hot fires we had in the furnaces. McClelland, Vantine, Rush, and Hickman, deserve particular mention.

I consider it my duty to bring to your notice the valuable assistance rendered me by First Assistant-Engineer E. Hoyt, who, during the whole engagement, was actively employed wherever most required, until after having penetrated the steam several times, while superintending the hauling of fires, trying to ascertain the extent of injury, etc., he was finally led away, completely exhausted and fainting.

We will be able to finish the repairs by to-morrow sufficiently well to carry fifteen pounds of steam until a new safety-valve and chamber can be procured and fitted to the starboard boiler.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN M. MOORE, *Chief-Engineer.*

*Captain JAMES ALDEN, commanding U. S. Steamer Richmond.*

#### REPORT OF CASUALTIES ON BOARD THE RICHMOND.

UNITED STATES STEAMER RICHMOND,  
BELOW PORT HUDSON, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, *March 15, 1863.* }

SIR: The following is a list of the killed and wounded in the action with the Port Hudson batteries last night:

*Killed.*—Charles Catherwood, P. M., age 26, born in Ireland, from barracks at Gosport, killed by a fragment of shell entering brain; John Thompson, P. M., age 36, born in Ireland, from barracks at Brooklyn, head carried off by shell or cannon-shot; John Howard, boatswain's mate, age 48, born in New Jersey, from receiving-ship Pennsylvania,



both knee-joints and right elbow shattered by fragments of a solid shot.—Total, 8.

*Wounded*.—A. Boyd Cummings, lieutenant-commander and executive officer, left leg carried away by a cannon-shot—amputation below knee-joint; Thomas Nolan, private P. M., right hand shattered and amputated; Joseph P. Mullen, P. M., contusion of brain—not severe; George W. Harris, P. M., contusion; Richard Lyons, captain of top, contusion; Alexander Thompson, seaman, contused wound; Henry Barnes, seaman, contusion; John S. Gross, corporal of marines, contusion; Robert H. Neely, corporal of marines, contusion; Michael O'Neil, P. M., subluxation; Robert Staples, P. M., contusion; Edward Conover, P. M., contusion.—Total, 12.

These latter injuries are not severe, and occurred from splinters.

Very respectfully, A. A. HENDERSON, *Surgeon*.

Captain JAMES ALDEN.

Some incidents of the fight, not mentioned by others, are spoken of in the report of Commander W. H. Macomb, of the *Genesee*, as shown in the following extract:

The moment the signal was made by the admiral, Captain Alden started the *Richmond*, with the *Genesee*, and took our position in line of battle, following the flag-ship. At about 11.30 the batteries opened fire upon the vessels, which was immediately returned by the heavy broadside of the *Richmond*, and in which we joined with all the guns we could bring to bear on that side, viz., the bow pivot, 100-pounder Parrott; the stern pivot, 10-inch; and the starboard after, 9-inch gun.

While passing up abreast of the batteries under their fire, we were fired upon by some guns on the right bank of the river, nearly opposite, when I opened the whole of our port battery upon these positions.

At 12.50, while proceeding past the batteries, and having arrived as high up as Thomas's Point, where the river bends to the westward, and after the *Richmond* and this vessel had commenced to turn in that direction, the *Richmond* having received a shot through her steam valve-chest, which rendered her engine disabled, we were compelled to turn the *Richmond* round, and tow her down the river to a place of safety, and anchored abreast of Profit Island, according to the instructions of the admiral.

At 2 A. M. cast off from the *Richmond* for the purpose of anchoring. At this moment the *Mississippi* was reported to have grounded abreast of the batteries. We immediately proceeded up to her, with a view of

rendering assistance, and found her on fire fore and aft. Sent one of the cutters to search the right bank of the river and rescue any of the officers or crew they might find there.

This movement was necessarily made with great risk to the *Gene-see*, as the *Mississippi's* guns were becoming so heated as momentarily to discharge themselves, as well as the great risk of being blown up, expecting the *Mississippi's* magazines might explode at any instant. After this we anchored at the upper end of Profit Island.

#### MONONGAHELA.

The *Monongahela* came next in line; a screw-steamer, of nearly fourteen hundred tons, mounting two 11-inch and two 9-inch Dahlgrens, one 60-pounder rifle, and five or six smaller guns. The *Kineo* gunboat was secured to her port-quarter. She opened fire upon the lower battery at 10.30 p. m. It is well to state here that these steamers could scarcely run more than two and a half miles per hour against the current at this point in the river, which fact accounts for the duration of the action. At half-past 11, the *Monongahela* came opposite the principal battery at "the turn," where the *Richmond* met with the disaster that turned her back. Here a pilot was stationed on the starboard side of one vessel and one on the port side of the other, to insure, if possible, a safe passage around the point. But, in spite of these precautions, the *Monongahela* soon struck heavily, while the *Kineo*, being of lighter draught, ran on, parted her fastenings, and went ashore or grounded. In doing this she carried away some of the rigging of the *Monongahela*, a part of her hammock-nettings, and tore the port-sheet anchor from its place. The shot from the rebel batteries at that time were doing serious damage. Two of the broadside 32-pounders were disabled, another shot rendered one of the 11-inch pivot-guns unmanageable, still another struck Captain McKinstrey from the bridge, killing three men in its passage. At this time the *Kineo* was afloat again, and having turned down the river, succeeded in swinging the *Monongahela* around and off into deep water, after she had been aground and under this heavy fire a helpless target for twenty-five minutes.

Sadly cut up in upper works and rigging, and with several killed, and many wounded, the officers of the *Monongahela* were

unwilling to retire, and the wounded McKinstry gave orders to push on up-stream once more. The Kineo was cast off and the Monongahela started up the river firing shells and shrapnel at the batteries. When nearly past the most dangerous point, the crank-pin of the forward engine become heated, so that the engine stopped, and the chief-engineer reported that he was unable to proceed. The vessel became at once unmanageable, and drifted down, passing the batteries again at no more than thirty yards distant. Here the rebels opened upon her with grape and musketry. Fortunately she was so near the batteries, nearer than the rebels supposed, that many of their shot passed over her, when in the most dangerous position, and she soon dropped out of range. At one time the enemy's grape was very destructive, sweeping every thing on deck before it. Four shots entered the port side when she was passing down, two of them near the water-line. One, an 80-pounder rifle, entered the port steerage and thence to the engine-room, and another, a 10-inch solid shot, demolished three state-rooms in the wardroom. On the berth-deck forward of the engines one shot entered the starboard side near the cutwater, one rifle-shot struck the starboard bow hawse pipe and demolished it, and cut the chain in two. The mainstay was carried away at the masthead, the mizzen-topmast and mizzen-mast were badly crippled, the main-topmast, and main-gaff were injured, the main-cross-trees were shot away, and the second launch, second cutter, and barge, were partly demolished. Eight shots went through and through the ship. Six of the crew were killed and twenty-one wounded.

It is quite evident that the Monongahela was severely handled, and that under the circumstances it was impossible for her to proceed. Nor does it appear what more her commander could have done. The wisdom of giving a gunboat as an assistant to each of the ships except the Mississippi, is clearly seen. But for the Albatross, the Hartford might have drifted under the batteries when caught by the current, at the point the Genesee took the disabled Richmond safely out of danger, and the Kineo first dragged the Monongahela off the shoal, and then, when her engine stopped, towed her away.

The following is an interesting extract from a letter of the commander of the Kineo, John Watters, giving an account

of that portion of the fight which could be seen from this gunboat:

As we advanced steadily up the river, in the position assigned by the general sailing order, secured to the port side of the United States steamer *Monongahela* for the purpose of mutual support, we were unable to join in the action until 10.30 P. M. When abreast the lowest battery, with which our consort was engaged, we received fire of musketry from the opposite bank, which was replied to immediately with 2-second shrapnel and grape, silencing them quickly. In this manner we continued steadily on, our consort keeping up a brisk fire upon the enemy's batteries, whose fire we were receiving, and we watching for a renewal of the musketry from the west bank. An hour later, when under the principal batteries, and getting along very well, although the atmosphere was greatly obscured by the smoke of our guns, and it was difficult to see we had kept the channel, and had reached the bend of the river, our fore-gaff was shot away, and, a few seconds afterward, a shot lodged in our rudder-post, splitting it, and rendering the rudder useless. Endeavored to work it with relieving tackles and rudder-chains, but found it could not be moved to the right or left. Sent a man over the stern in a bowline to examine the damage, and found the shot firmly imbedded between the rudder-post and the stern-post, thereby wedging it completely, and rendering it unserviceable.

At this time we were receiving the heaviest fire of the enemy's batteries, who generally fired over, and our consort, being damaged also in the rudder, was unable to keep the channel, and the two vessels were driven ashore by the current, which was very strong, and thrown on Thompson's Point, going full speed. The *Monongahela*, being deeper draught, grounded first, and stopped with a great shock. Stopped the engines and reversed quickly, but our momentum was so great the fasts between the two vessels were all torn away, except one hawser. Our fore channels and rigging were swept off, our bower anchor thrown in on deck, the hammock netting torn away, and several stanchions. We drove about a ship's length ahead, and grounded within ten feet of the bank. The engines being reversed, we succeeded in getting off. Backed down to the *Monongahela* to render assistance, which was asked for, she being still hard aground, and receiving a terrific fire. Astern of her the *Mississippi* was also ashore.

It is proper to state at this time that our pilot was on board the *Monongahela*, where he had been assisting the other pilot, by order of Captain McKinstry, of the *Monongahela*; and here we were separated

without a pilot, and the ship disabled seriously. Had great difficulty in working the ship in the current so as to get near the Monongahela, which we could only do by alternating the motions of the engines, but could not get near enough to receive her hawsers in consequence of the current cutting us off. Then resolved to go ahead and try to spring her off with the hawser we had, in which we were successful, and her bow swung off into deep water; seeing which, and being unable to render further assistance, cast off and dropped this ship by the current past the batteries under a severe fire, most of which passed over us, which was very remarkable, because the burning ship Mississippi enabled them to see us plainly. Under these circumstances, the first thought was to save the ship; and knowing we could do them little damage with our light battery, suspended fire and dropped down out of their range. As we drew near the mortar-fleet our engines also became disabled, but we soon obtained a favorable position for anchoring, and came to near the head of Profit Island at 3.30 A. M. Soon after anchoring heard a cry for aid, and sent a boat, which picked up an officer and eighteen men belonging to the Mississippi.

#### THE MISSISSIPPI.

The Mississippi was a side-wheel steamer, of the regular Navy, of about seventeen hundred tons burden, strongly built, and mounting at the time twenty-two guns, with a crew of nearly three hundred men. She was in charge of the same officer who commanded her at the New Orleans forts, when she demolished the ram *Manassas*, Captain (afterward Commodore) Melancton Smith.

Her position was the fourth in the line, astern of the *Monongahela*. At 11 P. M. the batteries, the leading ships, and the *Essex* and mortar-vessels below, were all hotly engaged. The Mississippi moved steadily into this tempest of shot, shell, and flame, the enveloping cloud of smoke and the darkness of the night made fitfully luminous, but not transparent, by the flashes of the guns. As before stated, officers who were in both battles deemed the fire from the Port Hudson batteries quite as severe as that from the forts Jackson and St. Philip, while the difficulty of navigating the river in the night was greater at Port Hudson.

This difficulty was probably more severely felt by the Mississippi than by the ships ahead of her, for their smoke was rolled back upon her. Literally, her gunners had no guide in aiming.

but the flash of the guns from the batteries, a somewhat uncertain mark, appearing only an instant, then lost in the darkness, and the steamer under headway and changing each moment the relative position of her guns. Almost nothing could be distinguished clearly, or for more than an instant, beyond the sides of the vessel, and even the pilot could not feel entirely certain in regard to their true position. The shadow of the bluff, thrown indistinctly upon the river, caused him to mistake somewhat their distance from the eastern shore, and the ship was kept too far to the left. But no human eye could penetrate the darkness, or perceive the danger.

She held her course steadily on, till abreast the town and the upper batteries, the "turning-point," a point of danger for them all. Just before this a large ship was dimly seen through the battle-cloud, headed down-stream; and the crew, believing it to be a rebel steamer, could with difficulty be restrained from firing into her as she passed. Captain Smith knew that the rebels had no steamer on the river of that size, and withheld the fire. It was well that he did, for it was the disabled Richmond, which her consort gunboat was towing out of action.

When abreast of the upper and most formidable batteries, and all were congratulating themselves that they were now about to pass the last difficulty, and the order had been given to "go ahead fast," in order to close up with the Monongahela, which could not then be seen, the vessel having gained her full speed, ran hard and fast aground, and keeled over "three streaks" to port, and there remained immovable. The engine was immediately reversed but in vain; she did not move. Then the port guns, which were out, but had not been used, were run in so as to bring the ship on an even keel; and as the starboard broadside could then be brought to bear, the fire was resumed.

For more than half an hour the engine was kept in motion with the action reversed, with all the steam which the boilers would bear, but with no effect upon the position of the vessel; she was immovably aground. So soon as it was necessary to let off steam to prevent an explosion, the rebels obtained the exact range, and then the Mississippi was only an excellent fixed target for the guns of three batteries delivering a cross-fire. She was now frequently struck and several times hulled, and it

was clearly seen that escape was impossible, and that long delay would only cause the useless slaughter of the crew, as well as the capture and destruction of the ship. Captain Smith therefore wisely determined to abandon and destroy the vessel, to prevent her from falling into the hands of the rebels. The sick and wounded were accordingly ordered up, the firing ceased, and three small boats, all he had, were at once employed in landing the crew, while at the same time swift preparations were made for burning the ship. The men were landed on the west bank, but none could tell what their fate would be, as the vessel had been fired upon with muskets from that bank as she came up, but their capture would be of less consequence than to have the ship fall into rebel hands.

The crew were ordered to throw all the small-arms overboard. The engineer was sent to destroy the engine, and the ship was set on fire in the forward store-room. After a little, a man was sent below to see whether the fire was doing its work, when three shots came through into the store-room, and the water rushed in and extinguished the fire. In the mean time the sick and wounded were sent down to the Richmond, and the crew were got on shore as rapidly as possible. The steamer was then fired in four different places; after a while, shot and shell were also crashing through her, and when the flames had made such progress as insured the speedy destruction of the ship, the crew having all been landed, Captain Smith and the first lieutenant left the Mississippi to her fate, and, under a sharp fire from the rebel batteries, they passed down to the Richmond.

The flames soon burst brightly out, and relieved from the weight of three hundred men, and settling somewhat by the stern by the collecting of the water that came in through the shot-holes, and jarred by the explosion of shells, she at length slid off the shoal into deep water; the current caught her bow, swung her round, and she was headed down stream, with her port battery, whose guns were loaded, pointed to the enemy's works. These as they became heated were discharged; and thus, as if by unseen hands, she gave the rebels a last defiant broadside as she slowly passed them, and soon after blew up with an explosion that shook shores and river miles away, and disappeared.

The whole operation in this painful desertion of the ship was

conducted in the most quiet and orderly manner, and this shows the coolness and good discipline of the crew, when it is considered that they had been for thirty-five minutes aground under the terrible cross-fire of three heavy batteries after the range had been obtained. The officers and crew lost all their effects; not an individual saved even a change of clothing, nor could they take away a single relic of their former victories. Every cherished memorial went down with their ship, or was destroyed in the explosion.

The results of the action are thus stated by Captain Smith: officers saved, 32; killed, 1; missing, 3; seamen saved, 179; killed and missing, 52; marines saved, 32; killed and missing, 8—total, 297.

The ammunition expended in the action shows the work the vessel's crew performed. It was as follows: 2,047 pounds of powder; 150 8-inch shells; 10 8-inch grape; 46 10-inch shells; 29 20-pounder rifle-shells; 30 howitzer shells and shrapnel.

Partially successful only as this attempt was, it nevertheless was very important that even one powerful vessel should be above Port Hudson. Colonel Ellet's ram and the iron-clad Indianola had both been destroyed, and the rebels had complete control of the river from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, and were enabled not only to supply both these places, but to send large amounts of food still farther eastward, and thus provide the means of carrying on the war. They had nothing, however, on the Mississippi or the Red River which could meet the Hartford, and therefore this whole trade was seriously interrupted.



## CHAPTER XX.

### OPERATIONS OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT ABOVE PORT HUDSON.

ON the morning of the 15th of March, after the battle, the admiral dropped down nearly to the Port Hudson batteries, hoping to be able to communicate with the ships below, but did not then succeed. Soon after, Commander Alden built what he called a crow's nest, at the mast-head of the Richmond; and Farragut having an army signal-officer on the Hartford, the communication was easily established. On the 16th he moved up the river with the Hartford, as far as the mouth of Red River. On the 17th he reached Natchez, and on the 18th anchored for the night a few miles from Grand Gulf, below Vicksburg. Here he found a battery of four rifled guns, ingeniously placed. The bank had been cut, so as to slope down from the top, and very small embrasures were dug out just on the crest of this embankment. When the guns were run back, they sank below the top of the bank, and neither guns nor men could be seen or reached by shot from a passing vessel. The guns were run up the inclined plane, and quickly fired; and the recoil carried them constantly down out of sight and reach.

These pieces were small, but their shells were a great annoyance to the Hartford as she passed, for she could do the rebels no harm, while the flag-ship was an excellent target. Several of these percussion-shells struck the mizzenmast directly over the heads of the admiral and his fleet-captain, Thornton A. Jenkins, but did not explode, which *apparent* accident probably saved their lives. Two men were killed and six wounded in this unequal fight with a hidden enemy. Soon after, Grand

Gulf was so fortified as to become one of the most formidable places on the river, as the extensive works were mounted with very heavy guns. On his passage up, the admiral passed the wreck of the *Indianola*, the iron-clad which her commander, a short time before, had permitted to be destroyed by two wooden boats. The *Indianola*, a strong boat with an iron-plated casemate, and mounting two 11-inch guns, had been sent down the river by Admiral Porter, past the Vicksburg batteries, in order to patrol the river below. Her career was suddenly and ingloriously ended by two wooden boats.

The *Hartford* then went up to Vicksburg, with the hope of obtaining some vessels from Porter; and on the passage up, Farragut found other batteries at Warrenton, which he also engaged, and passed without important injury. Admiral Porter did not think that he could then spare any vessels to go below; but General Ellet, who had command of the ram-fleet, undertook to send two down to the assistance of the *Hartford*. He prepared and started two; but one was destroyed and sunk by the rebel batteries, and the boiler of the other was perforated by a shot, and for the time all hope of assistance was destroyed. The boiler of the *Switzerland* was, however, repaired in a few days; and then the admiral once more went down the river, intending to remain at the mouth of Red River, to cut off the rebel supplies coming from that quarter; and when his own should be exhausted, he proposed to return to New Orleans. On his way down, he found that two heavy guns had been, in his absence, mounted at Grand Gulf. He passed them, however, with the loss of a single man, and proceeded to the mouth of Red River, to enforce the blockade there, and interrupt rebel steamers and supplies. His fleet, occupying the somewhat long and roomy prison between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, consisted now of the *Hartford*, the *Albatross*, and the ram *Switzerland*. With these he occupied himself for a time in blockading Red River, and in looking up and down the Mississippi, capturing many small steamers and other boats coming from Red River and other tributaries of the great stream, and preventing the crossing of supplies. His own brief account of his operations will be found interesting:

## FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, OFF THE MOUTH OF RED RIVER, May 2, 1863.

SIR: Since my last dispatch I have been maintaining the blockade of Red River and doing the enemy between this place and Port Hudson all the injury in my power. I have on two occasions caught their stores *in transitu*, and destroyed a large quantity of corn, meal, potatoes, sugar, and molasses, at Bayou Sara; I have also destroyed their flat-boats and taken their other boats whenever encountered. The ram *Switzerland*, on her last trip down, captured two fine metallic life-boats, which we needed very much, as this ship's boats are nearly all destroyed.

I have not returned to New Orleans, from the belief that we are doing the enemy most harm, at this juncture, where we are:

1st. By cutting off his supplies to Port Hudson from the west bank of the Mississippi.

2d. By preventing him from sending reinforcements from Port Hudson to the rebel General Taylor, whom General Banks is now pursuing toward Alexandria.

We hope also to prevent Kirby Smith from reinforcing Taylor with troops which he (Kirby Smith) has gone to Arkansas for. I have not a sufficient force to stop him at the mouth of Black River, and have therefore sent to beg of Admiral Porter that he will send me two iron-clads, and, if they arrive in time, I will either cut off Kirby Smith or coöperate with General Banks against Alexandria. If my light gunboats come up the Atchafalaya, I will try it with them; but their machinery is so exposed that they are a very poor dependence in these narrow rivers, which are just suited to the iron-clads. If Admiral Porter had given me two of his vessels, I should have had all the boats in Red River by this time.

Our gunboats captured the fort at Bute la Rose, and the rebels have deserted all their other fortifications on the Atchafalaya River and Fort De Russey, on the Red River, carrying all their guns to Alexandria, where all their workshops are, and there they say they will make a stand, but the refugees whom I have on board all say that the people of Alexandria are at least one-half Union.

I received last evening, per United States steamer *Arizona*, via the Atchafalaya River, a dispatch from General Banks, wishing to know if I could coöperate with him against Alexandria. To which I replied that I would do so to the extent of my ability, so soon as the gunboats arrived from above or below.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

It is always interesting to read an account of such scenes from an eye-witness, and one who shared the danger; and the author has availed himself of some notes made by an officer of high rank, who was then on board the Hartford :

In a short time the firing ceased, and expectation was on tiptoe for the appearance of the other vessels, so sure were all on board the Hartford that they would pass after the Hartford had escaped with such little damage and the loss of only one man and two slightly wounded.

The night wore on with the intensest anxiety for the fate of those on board of the absent vessels. In the midst of this anxiety the surroundings were brilliantly illuminated by what could not be any thing but a burning vessel. After a while the object was seen to be moving down the river, and at about daylight a loud explosion was heard in the distance.

Here, in sight of the enemy's works next morning, the Hartford with her little tender lay at anchor, without means of ascertaining the fate of the other vessels. All was still and quiet in the enemy's works; no one seemed to be stirring. Efforts were made to communicate by signal from the masthead of the vessel, in hopes that the flag might be seen over the trees on the intermediate point. But failing in that, the signal agreed upon with General Banks was made by the firing of guns indicating that the batteries had been safely passed; and then the admiral, anxious and greatly distressed, but not dismayed, proceeded leisurely up the river to fulfil as best he might with his own good ship, and her little consort, his self-imposed mission. At Bayou Sara the rebels were astir, but held no intercourse. Proceeding on, flat-boats, ferry-boats, cattle-boats, corn, sugar, and molasses, were destroyed.

Arriving at the mouth of the Red River, the Hartford anchored, and communicated with the shore.

Leaving the mouth of Red River on the morning of the 17th March, the Hartford and Albatross proceeded up the Mississippi. Passed Fort Adams without being molested. Sent boats ashore below Natchez and cut telegraphic wires. Anchored abreast of the town of Natchez in the afternoon, and communicated with the mayor. In passing Grand Gulf on the morning of the 19th, having been previously warned by signs from the freedmen along the bank of the river of danger, masked batteries opened and continued the firing as long as the vessels were in range. The fire was returned with but little effect, owing to the fact that nothing could be seen except the smoke of the enemy's guns. The Hartford was struck many times by light projectiles doing no serious damage to the vessel or rigging, but killing two of the crew.

Anchored below Warrenton on the afternoon of the 20th; sent the Fleet Captain on shore to reconnoitre the enemy's earthworks at Warrenton; found them to be protected by railroad iron, and apparently strong.

On the morning of the 21st got under way and passed the Warrenton batteries under a brisk fire of small-arms and field-pieces; destroyed a wharf-boat lying on the left bank above Warrenton.

Anchored below Vicksburg just out of range of the lower batteries. Communicated overland on the right bank of the river with Rear-Admiral Porter and General Grant. Received coal and provisions sent down the river past the Vicksburg batteries at night.

Observing the enemy engaged mounting heavy guns at Warrenton, the Hartford on the 22d proceeded down the river and attacked. The enemy returned the fire with field-pieces and small-arms, but no damage was done to the vessel.

On the 25th got under way, attacked and passed the Warrenton batteries, going to the relief of the ram Switzerland, which had passed the Vicksburg batteries considerably damaged.

On the morning of the 28th got under way and proceeded down the river. When near Warrenton, the enemy opened from a casemated earthwork. The fire was returned, and continued as long as the vessel could be kept within range.

On the evening of the 31st, the Switzerland leading, followed by the Albatross and Hartford, passed the batteries at Grand Gulf under a brisk fire of about fifteen minutes' duration. The rebels having mounted heavy guns while the Hartford was above, they succeeded in striking the Switzerland a number of times, the projectiles passing entirely through the upper works. The Hartford had one man killed.

On the 1st of April the Hartford took up a position commanding the mouth of the Red River, with the Switzerland and Albatross ahead. The vessels having been thoroughly fitted to resist rams and boarders, the crews were kept ready night and day to repel threatened attacks of the rebel rams and cotton-boats reported to be lying in the Red River awaiting a favorable moment to attack. Picket-boats were kept up the Red River at night, supplied with rockets to signal the approach of the enemy's vessels.

During the stay of the Hartford at this point, the Albatross and Switzerland were employed daily policing the river, destroying boats and preventing communication as far as possible from one side to the other. The Hartford also made trips as far down as Port Hudson, destroying supplies and boats.

On the 7th of April Mr. Gabaudan, the admiral's secretary, left the ship (being a volunteer for the service) in a skiff with a contraband, and ran safely by the batteries at Port Hudson, with dispatches for the fleet below, and for the Department. The successful accomplishment of this important but hazardous service was soon known by the enemy, and he afterward kept such a strict lookout upon the river, that the only way by which the communication could be kept up between the admiral above and the fleet below was across the point of land opposite to the Port Hudson batteries.

In returning to the mouth of Red River, on the forenoon of April 9th, the smoke of two steamers was seen ahead. The rebel steamer J. D. Clark was encountered and captured in a sinking condition, the other steamer escaping, her speed being such as to enable her to keep out of range of the Hartford's guns until well inside the entrance to the Red River. This capture placed in our hands Major Howell, a rebel officer, who was on his way to make arrangements for passing cattle from Texas to their army in Mississippi, and it was afterward ascertained to have been a very important event in the war.

On the 15th of April Mr. Gabaudan, accompanied by a party of men from the Richmond, some officers of the army, and mails in charge of Acting-Ensign Swan, of the Richmond, reached the Hartford above Port Hudson, having eluded the enemy's pickets in crossing the point of land.

Immediately after this, he sent the Albatross, the Estrella, and the Arizona up the Red River, to examine and attack, if necessary, Fort De Russey, and to ascertain if any reinforcements had been sent down from Arkansas to the rebel General Taylor. The manner in which this was accomplished is seen by the following extract from a spirited account given by Commander John E. Hart, of the Albatross:

On the following morning at 5 A. M. (May 4th), the steamers got under way and stood up the Red River in the following order: Albatross, Estrella, Arizona. We entered a part of Red River that was exceedingly crooked, and, instead of soft mud, we now had a sandy bottom. Great care was required in turning the sharp bends so as not to ground on low points and sand-bars. It was slow work, and in consequence we did not reach the first picket station of the fort until nearly 7 o'clock. No musket was fired by the guard to announce our approach. A pile of pine-knots was ready to be ignited. A man came off and announced himself as being a strong Union man, and offered assistance. We received him on board, and we found him of some use to our pilots. As

we steamed along, the lookout aloft reported the smoke of steamers. Our Union man told us that it was the smoke of two rebel steamers that were carrying away the Indianola's 11-inch guns and the iron-work of Fort De Russey to Alexandria.

We gave the men breakfast, and then cleared the ship for action; got every thing in place, and everybody appeared to understand that a hard fight might possibly be in store for them, and it was indeed satisfactory to see how willingly the officers and crew entered into the proper spirit. Your orders directed me to throw a few shell from a point below Fort De Russey in order to satisfy myself that the place was abandoned; it was unnecessary to do so, for we saw by the smoke of the steamers that its immediate neighborhood was occupied, and I thought it best that the attack on the steamers, if it should be necessary to make one, should be commenced quite suddenly, with a view to surprise them if possible. At 8.20 passed another picket station, with its pile of pine-knots; here again no alarm was given as we went by. At 8.40 saw ahead of us the sharp bend in the river, and an open space that lies directly opposite the fort. A high piece of wood screened us from view, and all three vessels steamed along slowly and carefully.

The Parrott gun on our bows was carefully pointed, and three broad-side guns were ready to discharge the very moment that we should emerge into the open view of our enemies. As we appeared before them a glance showed us the position of the river steamers and the situation of every thing connected with the low-~~low~~ fort. Two large rebel iron steamers, the Grand Duke and Mary T., had their bows moored to the earthworks in such a way that their hulls were below the top of them; both boats pointed down-stream, so as to head almost directly for the broadside of a vessel that was passing the cleared space, and until she turned the sharp bend. There were three casemates on the battery, and alongside of one of the steamers was a flat-boat with a very large gun—the 11-inch gun, in all probability, that was said to have been taken from the ill-fated iron-clad Indianola. It was ready to be towed away. There was a heavy raft of large-sized logs stretched across the stream, and secured by chains to trees on either bank, and also by strong moorings to the bottom, in order to prevent the current from taking it down-stream.

On the left bank of the river were thirty or forty cavalry, with carbines, stationed behind the levee. With all this in plain view I did not hesitate to bring the steamer into action, and commenced with a discharge of five guns—the 30-pounder Parrott on the fore-castle, three 32-pounder broadside guns, and the rifled 12-pounder Dahlgren howitzer on the quarter. My starboard side was presented to the enemy. The

confederates returned it promptly, and it was kept up on both sides vigorously until a dense cloud of smoke gathered between us. When it cleared away, we went at it again; the enemy had the most guns, and sent their shot and grape thick and fast. Another cloud of smoke obscured us, and we took advantage of the occasion to turn our steamer so as to present the port battery to the enemy. When partly turned a 32-pounder ball came through the wheel-house, carrying away the wheel, killing John W. Brown, seaman, and Mr. Hamilton, a pilot belonging to the flag-ship *Hartford*, who was zealously assisting the pilot of the *Albatross*, Mr. Archibald D. Merritt. Mr. Merritt was thrown some distance, and had both of his hands wounded by the splinters of the wheel. He did not consider himself disabled, and although urged repeatedly to report himself to the surgeon, he continued to give directions and advice until the action was ended. As soon as the wheel was gone, came a critical time; scarcely a moment was to be lost. The relieving tackles were manned, and the executive officer, Mr. Du Bois, was ready for the emergency. There was no pausing or wavering on his part; had there been, it might have resulted in precisely such a catastrophe as happened to the *Queen of the West* at the same place.

The current of the river and the eddies were working at cross-purposes, and it seemed that the steamer for a while could not be managed. Our bows were aground, and then our stern, as we went ahead or backed, and it required the nicest management and undivided attention; no one but a cool man could have been able to accomplish what was desired, and Mr. Du Bois did all that was required. He received prompt attention both from those in charge of the engine and those in charge of the helm.

The cavalry on shore were making efforts to pick off our men at the relieving tackles, and the solid shot and grape began to tell seriously upon our hull. We were hit repeatedly, a second shot passing under the wheel-house, tearing the decks; a shot passed through the hull near the water-line; another passed clean through both sides, and just grazed the steam-drum; another one went through the smoke-stack; the main-mast was cut half in two close to the deck; the foremast was hit about fifteen feet from the deck; another shot cut the fore-yard in two, which was lashed to the rail; the same shot, in its flight, tore up the deck and scattered splinters in every direction. We were hulled eleven times, and serious damage was done to our rigging and spars. We were forty minutes in action, fighting at a distance of not over 500 yards, and during that time we fired fourteen broadsides that were well directed, and while turning our head around so as to head down-stream we used our muskets and rifles.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### FINAL BOMBARDMENT AND CAPTURE OF PORT HUDSON.

EARLY in May, General Banks had invested Port Hudson, and Admiral Farragut prepared to give him all possible assistance with the Navy. On the 1st of June the Hartford and her two consorts still remained above the place; while the Richmond, the Essex, and the Genesee, together with some mortar-vessels, lay below the town. At that time a battery was put up on shore, of navy guns, four 9-inch guns, and four 24-pounders, to be worked by guns' crews from the ships, and under the superintendence of Navy officers—a very formidable addition to the attacking power.

On the 18th of June an attempt was made to blow up the Essex with a torpedo at Profit Island. The following description of the apparatus will be interesting to the reader, as these machines played an important part in the rebel warfare. The account is an extract from a letter of the commander of the Essex, C. H. B. Caldwell: .

I stopped the vessel below the infernal machine, with her head upstream, sent the men to quarters, and dispatched two boats to take up or destroy the apparatus. From the inside buoys an iron wire (apparently telegraph wire) was discovered leading up the beach, then over a glass bottle (attached to a tree as an insulator), and from thence into the woods. About fifty fathoms of this wire was hauled down to the boats, and its connection with the buoys severed; all the buoys were then raised, and found to be connected by wires, and a torpedo of cylindrical form, three feet long and a foot in diameter, made of boiler-iron, and finished in the most workmanlike manner, was found attached to the barrel-buoy, and hung thereto with about a dozen turns of wire

rove through two eye-bolts riveted in one end of the machine; the other end had a plug fitted in, with a wire leading through and communicating with the interior. A number of wires appeared to connect with this end of the machine, but the connection could not be understood, as the wires were all broken while raising it, or cut immediately after, to prevent accident.

We raised, in all, one machine, three buoys, and about one hundred fathoms of telegraph wire; other portions of the apparatus were lost, together with a quantity of wire, owing to the latter breaking by the heavy strain on it, in attempting to weigh the lost portions.

This apparatus was skilfully made, and carefully laid—exactly in our track, and between the points already mentioned, which contracted the river to its narrowest bounds. Near the opposite shore the current runs with great velocity. I was extremely anxious to examine the contents of this machine, but after making a few careful experiments, I found that it could not be opened without danger of moving the wire; I therefore had it taken on shore and secured in a hole in the levee, and a long line bent to the wire: then a boat pulled out with the other end of the line, and when it became taut the machine burst with a tremendous explosion, tearing away a large piece of the levee, and throwing the pieces of iron in every direction; one piece, weighing about two pounds, fell on board the vessel, distant about three hundred yards. It would seem that the machine was made to explode *both* by *friction* and *electricity*. I think there were others besides the one raised. I consider these machines too dangerous to handle, and hereafter shall destroy the buoys, and taking the in-shore end of the wire, drag the apparatus well into the river and sink it.

The operations of the mortar-flotilla and the service which these vessels rendered in the reduction of Port Hudson cannot be better shown than in the letter of this same Commander Caldwell to Admiral Farragut. It is only by presenting some such statements, in detail, that the work of the Navy, on such fields of action, can be made to appear:

U. S. IRON-CLAD *Essex*, July 1, 1863.

SIR: On leaving command of the *Essex* and mortar-flotilla, I have respectfully to report, in general terms, their proceedings since the regular investment of Port Hudson, commencing May 23d.

Previous to this date the vessels bombarded regularly every night for one hour, varying the hour each night. At the conclusion of our

bombardment on the night of May 9th, the enemy opened upon us from the outer field-works facing the river, with four 20 and 30-pounder Parrotts, and one 5-inch rifled gun, and several rifled field-pieces. The day before I directed the vessels to get the range of these works, and the moment they opened on us we answered with reduced charges, throwing the shells with admirable precision in and about the works. The Essex opened upon the outer battery, where the 5-inch rifle was placed. We soon silenced all the batteries and drove the enemy from the works with their guns; they never molested us again from this position. We killed two and wounded several men, and killed a number of mules belonging to the guns.

The instantaneous change of the fire of the mortars with 20-pound charges, throwing the shell well up into the main work, to 7 and 9-pound charges, throwing them into the field-works close at hand, excited the astonishment and admiration of the enemy, which their officers very frankly admitted in conversation with ours.

From the 23d of May to the 26th of June there followed a constant succession of bombardments and artillery fights between the Essex and the mortar-vessels on one side, and the rebel batteries on the other. During these engagements we silenced and drove from the tower or citadel of the enemy their men and guns three times. We have fired from this vessel seven hundred and thirty-eight shells, and from the mortar-vessels an aggregate of two thousand eight hundred and six 13-inch shells. The Essex has been exposed during all this time to the fire of two 10-inch columbiads, two 8-inch columbiads, and two rifled-guns, one 6-inch, the other 5-inch. I do not think it an exaggeration to say that, in all, one thousand shot and shell from these guns have been thrown at her, of which twenty-three have taken effect upon her hull, and several others have torn her awnings and windsails. Of the twenty-three, one shell has exploded in her, throwing pieces of shell around the steerage and pilot-house; three have passed almost through the strongest part of the vessel forward, cutting entirely through the iron and the greater part of the woodwork, and crushing in the inner lining of oak; three have raked her deck, cutting out several planks; and one has passed down through the vessel—the latter, a 10-inch solid shot, striking the deck at an angle of thirty degrees from the perpendicular, passing through the starboard smoke-stack, through the deck, a pile of boards, a coal-bunker placed over and for the protection of the steam-drum and boilers, grazed the boiler, passed through a boiler-plate iron bulk-head, struck an oak timber and glanced off, passing a few inches over the steam-pipe, a few inches under the escape-pipe, carrying

away a small dripping-pipe, through the machinery, and over the galley into the wheel-house, and disappeared.

The effects of Parrott shell striking the plates forcibly is to explode, indenting the plates like the inside of an ordinary breakfast saucer; all solid shot or rifle-bolts go through the plates and bury in the wood; all shot or shell striking at an angle have, in every instance, glanced off, one only cutting through the plate and crushing the woodwork; even this glanced off and buried itself in the river bank. I am happy to state that we have lost no men, and have had but six wounded, and those slightly.

In addition to the regular service of the vessel, seventeen of our men, under command of Ensign Shepard, have assisted in manning the naval battery of our 9-inch guns, mounted near the trenches, and coöperating with the batteries of our Army.

During the whole of the bombardment the little mortar-vessels have maintained their position just astern of the Essex, exposed to many of the shot that have escaped this vessel, besides others directed exclusively at them. The Sarah Bruen has been struck thirteen times in hull, spars, and rigging, and nearly all the others from one to three times; they have stood their ground without flinching or showing the least disposition to drop to a more sheltered position. I take great pleasure in stating I have found their commanders a most respectable, reliable, sober, and intelligent set of men.

The commander of the Orvetta is only an ensign; I trust he may receive the appointment of master—the same appointment as held by all the others. In conclusion, I have to report the new 100-pounder Parrott gun you sent to this vessel is the most extraordinary gun for range and accuracy I have ever seen. The short distance between this vessel and the citadel has enabled us to strike it fairly nearly every shot, and bury the shell deep into the embankment, and at every explosion rending deep fissures in its side. The effect of the shell has elicited great praise of its powers from the army officers serving in our battery near the citadel.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. H. B. CALDWELL,

*Commander U. S. Navy, commanding.*

*Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT, Commander-in-Chief W. G. B. Squadron.*

Here was a continuous battle, every day, for more than a month, in which the most powerful artillery (excepting our 11-inch and 15-inch guns) was used on both sides, and where the

effect of solid shot and rifle-shells upon the armor of the *Essex* could be fully seen ; and the account which Commander Caldwell has given of this matter is both interesting and instructive. Add to this the statement of Admiral Farragut, that the ships were engaged every night from three to five hours, in shelling the rebel fortifications, and often through the day, in addition to this, and a more correct idea can be formed of what the Navy performed in the work of capturing this stronghold. At the same time the great strength of the fortifications, at this point, may be inferred from the fact that, in spite of all that the Navy could effect, and notwithstanding several bloody assaults by the army, the place held out until Vicksburg had fallen, and their supplies were entirely exhausted.

Just before the time when Port Hudson surrendered, a party of Texans erected some strong batteries near Donaldsonville, with the purpose of preventing supplies from going up the river to General Banks. On the 7th of July these batteries attacked the *Monongahela*, as she was going up ; and the brief engagement had, in one respect, a very sad result. The commander of the *Monongahela*, Abner Read, was mortally wounded by a shell, and died soon after ; and the fleet-captain, Thornton A. Jenkins was also severely though not dangerously injured. One seaman was killed, and several others wounded. On the 9th of July these same batteries attacked the *New London*, perforated both her boiler and steam-drum, by which several of her crew were scalded, and so disabled the steamer that she was run over to the opposite shore and made fast, out of range of the batteries, where she was soon after rescued by the *Monongahela* and the *Essex*. The following note expresses the feeling of the Army in regard to the services of the batteries worked by the crews and officers from the ships at Port Hudson :

OFFICE CHIEF OF ARTILLERY, HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF, }  
NINETEENTH ARMY CORPS, PORT HUDSON, *July 10, 1863.* }

SIR : Upon the return to you for duty of the detachment from the naval force which has assisted in the reduction of Port Hudson, I am requested by Brigadier-General Arnold, chief of artillery, to express to you his thanks, and to acknowledge the service rendered by the naval battery commanded by Lieutenant-Commander Terry and Ensigns Shepard and Swann. Their duties were discharged with the most distin-

guished zeal and skill, and they have gained a right to the thanks of the army. The commanding general will be most happy to convey, through you, to those officers these expressions, and the chief of artillery takes pleasure in acknowledging his obligations.

By order of Brigadier-General Arnold, chief of artillery :

I have the honor, sir, to be, very respectfully,

S. S. NEWBURY, *Assistant Chief of Artillery.*

*The Officer commanding Naval Forces below Port Hudson.*

In September another disaster occurred to the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron. A joint expedition was undertaken against Sabine Pass, in which the land force consisted of about four thousand men, under General Franklin; and the naval force was four steamers, mounting in all twenty-seven guns—the Granite City, the Sachem, the Clifton, and the Arizona. In the attack upon the forts, the Sachem was struck in the boiler and disabled, the Clifton ran aground under the batteries, and both were captured. The army transports, the Granite City and the Arizona, were fortunate enough to get safely back, while Sabine Pass remained still in the hands of the rebels. The narrative must now turn back to the operations of the Mississippi flotilla.

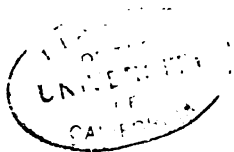
## CHAPTER XXII.

### OPERATIONS OF PORTER'S MISSISSIPPI FLOTILLA.

AFTER General Williams had withdrawn his small army from Vicksburg, in the latter part of July, 1862, and Admiral Davis had moved his vessels to Helena, Admiral D. D. Porter was appointed to the command of the Mississippi flotilla, which comprised the fleet of iron-clads and other gunboats above Vicksburg. At the time when he took this command on the Upper Mississippi, the guerillas were exceedingly troublesome along the river, firing upon armed transports and committing every description of outrage. In addition to this, it was evident that large amounts of supplies were furnished to the rebels by steamboats that, stopping at points where there were no United States troops, permitted themselves (apparently) to be robbed, and thus a trade was kept up which was very important for the rebel cause. Porter adopted very stringent and effectual measures, both for punishing guerillas and stopping this contraband trade. He ordered all steamers to be seized that were stopping at unauthorized places, and he refused to recognize the irregular bands that infested the river as coming within the common rules of warfare.

In December an army expedition of a formidable character was fitted out under General Sherman, at Memphis, for an attack on Vicksburg, in which work Admiral Porter was to coöperate with his gunboats. The attempt on the rebel "Gibraltar" was to be made on the north side of the city, and consequently it became important that we should have the command of the Yazoo River. Of this fact the rebel commanders were by no means ignorant, and not only had they heavily fortified Haines's

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Bluff on that river, but the stream was obstructed by rafts, and almost literally filled with torpedoes. So few of these infernal machines had exploded compared with the great number which the rebels laid down, that our officers began to pay less attention to them, through familiarity, than they really deserved.

On the 11th of December the *Marmora* and *Signal* were sent up the Yazoo on a reconnoissance, and ascended about twenty miles, when they came upon a collection of scows, boats, and stationary floats, that indicated the presence of torpedoes. One of these exploded near the *Signal*, and the crew of the *Marmora* exploded another by firing muskets at the head of it, visible above the water. The commanders of these two boats reported that they could with safety destroy these torpedoes if they could be protected by gunboats. The plan was considered to be practicable, and the gunboats *Cairo*, Lieutenant Selfridge, the *Pittsburg*, Lieutenant Hoel, and the ram *Queen of the West*, were sent up the river to protect the *Signal* and *Marmora*. The plan of operation was, to send small boats to scour both shores, in order to discover the location of the torpedoes, which, when discovered, were, with the aid of the *Marmora* and *Signal*, to be hauled on shore. The ram was to follow in the rear of these boats, and the gunboats were to be kept astern of all, where they could protect the foremost vessels with their guns, while out of the reach of explosions themselves. This expedition proceeded up the Yazoo, and in the course of the day the *Cairo* was blown up.

A brief account of this disaster will serve to show the reader some of the perils to which our officers, our seamen, and their vessels were hourly exposed, in their operations on the Western and Southern rivers. There was no hour of day or night when there could be in these gunboats, for officers or men, a feeling of quiet and security:

U. S. GUNBOAT *SIGNAL*, OFF YAZOO RIVER, *December 13, 1862.*

SIR: It becomes my painful duty to announce to you the total loss of the gunboat *Cairo*, while under my command, from the explosion of two torpedoes under or near her, placed in the Yazoo River, some sixteen miles from its mouth.

I left our anchorage at about 8 o'clock A. M., December 12, in company with the gunboats *Pittsburg*, *Marmora*, *Signal*, and ram *Queen of the West*, under orders from Captain Walke to carefully proceed up

the Yazoo to where torpedoes had been discovered the day before, and to effect the destruction of as many as possible. It was understood that the light gunboats were to go ahead, followed by myself and the Pittsburg, to protect them by shelling the woods on the river-bank.

Arriving near the spot indicated, when the leading gunboat, the Marmora, was partially hidden by a bend in the river, a heavy fire of musketry opened; the steamer commenced backing at the same time, leading me to suppose she was attacked from the shore. I hastened up to her support, when I found the firing was from the Marmora at an object, a block of wood floating in the water.

I ordered her to cease firing, and to lower a boat to examine. They either did not hear my order or were loath to obey it, and showing no signs of executing it, I lowered one of my own boats. They fished it up, and found it to be a portion of a torpedo which had exploded the day before.

In the mean while, the head of the Cairo having got in toward the shore,, I backed out to straighten up steam, and ordered the Marmora to go ahead slow. I had made but half a dozen revolutions of the wheel, and gone ahead perhaps half a length, the Marmora a little ahead, leading, when two sudden explosions in quick succession occurred, one close to my port quarter, the other apparently under my port bow; the latter so severe as to raise the guns under it some distance from the deck. She commenced to fill so rapidly that in two or three minutes the water was over her forecastle. I shoved her immediately for the bank, but a few yards distant, got out a hawser to a tree, hoping to keep her from sliding off into deep water. The pumps, steam and hand, were immediately manned, and every thing done that could be. Her whole frame was so completely shattered that I found immediately that nothing more could be effected than to move the sick and the arms. I ordered the Queen of the West alongside, and passed what articles I could get at into her, with a portion of the crew, the remainder taking to our boats. The Cairo sunk in about twelve minutes after the explosion, going totally out of sight, except the top of the chimneys, in six fathoms of water. I am happy to say that though some half a dozen men were injured, no lives were lost.

I cannot speak too highly of the officers' and men's behavior; there was perfect discipline and order to the last. The crew remained at their quarters until ordered away, and did what little could be done under the circumstances.

The most of the bags and hammocks was saved, as was every thing that floated from the wreck. In the mean while I directed Captain

Hoel, of the Pittsburg, to send boats up the shore, under cover of his guns, to destroy and discover the mode of firing these torpedoes. Several of them were destroyed, but I leave the particulars to his report.

Having accomplished all that was in our power, and destroyed every vestige of the unfortunate Cairo that remained above water, it was with deep regret and melancholy that I felt obliged to return down the river.

I have nothing to add in justification of myself that does not appear in this report.

Though I found we were in the vicinity of torpedoes, there were no signs to show at the time that any were in my immediate neighborhood, the Marmora having passed ahead of me.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOMAS O. SELFIDGE, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

Captain HENRY WALKER, *U. S. N.,*

*commanding Naval Forces off Yazoo River.*

General Sherman's force of forty thousand men having reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, it was determined to make an attack from the north side with the aid of the gunboats, and it was thought important to do this as speedily as possible, before any reënforcements could be thrown into the place. In order to do this, it was necessary to control at least the lower portion of the Yazoo. Heavy batteries had recently been erected on this river, in order to prevent the landing of any troops destined for an attack on this side, and torpedoes had also been thickly planted. On the 27th of December, early in the morning, the boats began the work of removing torpedoes. Rebel riflemen were concealed in pits on all sides, and the men were exposed to an annoying fire. These, however, were compelled to recede from the fire of the vessels as they advanced, and by 3 o'clock p. m. the boats had reached a point about three-quarters of a mile from the main batteries. Our object in this movement was to draw off a portion of the garrison from Vicksburg to oppose the passage of the Yazoo, when it might be possible for General Sherman to throw a body of troops along the Milledale road between the rebels and the town.

The small boats finished the clearing of the river to within about twelve hundred yards of the batteries, to which point the Benton was moved up, and her battery was opened upon the

enemy's works. The other gunboats were also ordered up, but it was found that the channel was not wide enough to admit two vessels abreast, and consequently the sturdy old Benton was obliged to bear the brunt of the fight alone.

The rebels had eight heavy guns which bore upon her, and for two hours she endured this severe fire, and was much cut up, though she was not disabled. Her gallant commander, Lieutenant Gwin, was very seriously wounded, as was also her executive officer, George P. Lord.

Several other gunboats participated partially in this fight; but not only was the stream so narrow as to prevent any efficient coöperation, but the wind was blowing a gale, and that rendered all the iron-clads nearly unmanageable in the contracted channel. The Benton tended so strongly to turn broadside to the wind, that they were obliged to tie her to the bank, where she was of course a fine target for the rebel guns. Nearly every shot fired then struck her somewhere, and they were mostly 64-pounders and 50-pound rifle-shot. She was struck thirty times after she was moored to the bank. Her side-armor and her pilot-house turned them aside with little harm; but whenever one struck the deck, it crushed through all, and in this manner some ten were killed and wounded. Two of the Benton's guns were struck and rendered unserviceable, but the vessel was still ready for another battle. Her frame was a very strong one, and it could bear a heavy pounding from shot without being seriously shattered.

A glance at the general situation in the West is necessary, in order to understand the position of things at Vicksburg at the time of this battle. It was decided, in the latter part of 1862, that Vicksburg should be made the main object of attack by the Army of the West, for thus only could the Mississippi be opened, while it was apparent to all that the complete control of the great river would sever the "Confederacy" in twain.

In order to accomplish this, a triple movement was to be made. Sherman was to go down from Memphis with forty thousand men, which, as already stated, he did, carrying out his part of the plan; General Banks was to move up from New Orleans with a coöperating force; and General Grant was to come from the East, by the way of Grenada and Jackson: and

these three portions of the army were thus to unite and invest Vicksburg, for it could not be taken by a sudden assault. A large amount of supplies had been collected at Holly Springs for the force of General Grant, when he should advance. General Rosecrans, in Tennessee, was expected to prevent Bragg from sending any reinforcements to Vicksburg; and it was supposed that the advance of Grant would occupy Pemberton at Grenada. The proposed combination, however, was not effected. General Banks did not ascend the river, as was expected; and the rebels, understanding the design of Grant, seized Holly Springs, destroyed his gathered stores, and thus prevented his advance.

By these untoward events Sherman was left to make the attack on Vicksburg with no coöperating land force, and of course the gunboats could not aid him beyond the range of their guns. Porter with his fleet covered the points of debarkation and protected the transports, and could also aid, by his fire, a body of troops while advancing *toward* the hills; but it was evident that, beyond a certain line, the army would have to fight its way alone. The ground between the river and Chickasaw Bluffs is low and swampy, and on account of the heavy rains, at that time, was almost impassable; and the troops found themselves stopped in every direction by small bayous, deep and muddy, which could neither be avoided nor safely passed.

On the 28th of December General Sherman had advanced to within skirmishing distance, and a strong force of gunboats was sent up to a position where they could sweep the ground between the Yazoo batteries and the hills, so that reinforcements could not be sent across. On the 29th the assault was made, and was repulsed with severe loss on our part; and the troops having fallen back, were compelled to bivouac, in a drenching rain, on the half-overflowed marshes, with no shelter but their blankets. This assault upon the enemy's centre having been repulsed, a new plan of attack was devised. The rebel troops were so disposed that their right rested upon the Yazoo batteries, at or near Snyder's Farm or Drumgould's Bluff, their left upon Vicksburg, while the connecting line was a natural fortification, strengthened by a year's labor of a thou-



sand blacks under the direction of skilful engineers. It was not surprising that the assault should fail.

The new plan was, that the gunboats should cover the landing of two thousand choice troops, on the rebel right near the batteries ; that these should, if possible, be carried ; and thus the enemy's right would be turned, and the substantial control of the Yazoo River would be obtained.

Owing to a heavy fog, which prevented the gunboats from moving at the time designated, it was necessary to delay the attack ; and this gave the rebels time to throw heavy reinforcements into Vicksburg from Jackson and Grenada. This they could not have done had it been possible for Grant to advance as he proposed, or had General Banks arrived from New Orleans. Under such circumstances it was quite evident that no impression could be made upon Vicksburg with the force at command, and it was equally clear that our army could not remain in the position it then occupied. How to withdraw it safely was a difficult question. Here was performed one of the most extraordinary feats of the war—one which reflected great credit upon the soldiers and their officers, and which showed the value of the river gunboats. On the morning of the 2d of January, 1863, the men, the guns, the stores, the ammunition, and the animals of this large army were reëmbarked on the transports, protected by the gunboats, and all were placed safely on board before the movement was discovered ; and when it was known, it was too late to give us any annoyance. Without the loss, as is stated, of a gun, or a man, or an animal, all were secure under the guns of the fleet ; and although the rebels sent down several regiments with field-pieces to attack the transports, they were easily scattered by the gunboats ; and in the afternoon the whole army, in transports, convoyed and protected by the fleet, steamed out of the Yazoo ; and the troops were landed above, on the west side of the Mississippi, at Milliken's Bend. At no time, perhaps, during the rebellion was the value of steam, as a war-force, more signally manifested. An army of forty thousand men, with all its artillery and arms, and stores of every description, was taken up, almost in a mass, in the very presence of an enemy, by whom they had been repulsed, and borne away in safety and without the slightest loss.

It showed how largely the power of machinery must enter into the calculations of modern war. Thus another attempt to capture Vicksburg was foiled, and it still remained the unconquered stronghold of the river. Admiral Porter describes this operation as follows :

UNITED STATES MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, YAZOO RIVER, *January 8, 1863.*

SIR: The army has changed its position, which it was obliged to do owing to the heavy rains. The men have been without shelter for five days, the rain at times coming down in torrents. It was impossible for any army to work under the circumstances. They failed in the first assault only because the supporting division did not come up to its work, and the reserve fired (it is said) into our own men. Could the first division have held the batteries (which they took) for three minutes longer, our army could have commanded the hills back of Vicksburg. So desperate were the rebels that they fired grape and canister into and through their own retreating men, and mowed them down by the dozens.

The point of attack, at one time practicable, was no longer so after the assault of our army. It was rendered impassable by abatis and stockades. It was then determined by General Sherman and myself to attempt the forts on the Yazoo, at Drumgould's Bluff, by a night attack. Ten thousand men were to have been thrown right at the foot of the cliffs, risking the loss of the transports, while all the iron-clads were to open fire on the batteries and try and silence them temporarily. The ram *Lioness*, under Colonel Ellet, was fitted with an apparatus for breaking torpedo-wires, and was to go ahead and clear the way. Colonel Ellet was also provided with fifteen torpedoes to blow up the raft and enable the vessels to get by if possible. This desperate duty he took upon himself cheerfully, and no doubt would have performed it well had the opportunity occurred. The details of the expedition were left to me, and it was all ready to start at 3.30 A. M. A dense fog unfortunately set in at midnight and lasted until morning, when it was too late to start. It was so thick that vessels could not move; men could not see each other at ten paces. The river was too narrow for operations in clear weather, much less in a fog. After the fog, there was in the afternoon every indication of a long and heavy rain. The general very wisely embarked his whole army without being disturbed by the enemy, and is now lying five miles above Vicksburg, waiting for good weather and for McClernand to take command. The latter arrived before the army left its position, and approved the change. As we left the rain poured down in torrents, and will continue to do so for some time longer, rendering

land operations perfectly impracticable. While the army leaders were deciding what to do, I have enough employment for the vessels here to patrol the river and occupy those posts which have been partially deserted, or where apprehension of invasion is felt.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

The plan of attack was then changed. The army, with reinforcements from General Grant, was landed on the point opposite Vicksburg, and soon General Grant himself assumed the command.

About this time Admiral Porter withdrew all his gunboats from the Yazoo, as they were out of coal; and the rebels, under the impression that he had left entirely, fell into a trap. Steamboats had been employed in carrying supplies and arms to Port Hudson. Eleven of these, as stated by Admiral Porter, went up the Yazoo for supplies, not dreaming of danger, as the gunboats were all gone; but these unpleasant visitors came back just in season to cut off their return—and they were caught and held in their narrow river prison.

The services of the ram-fleet should not be passed over here. The fitting up of these boats was an experiment, made early in the war, under the direction of Colonel Charles R. Ellet—a man of great courage and enterprise, and who was full of enthusiasm in regard to the efficiency of this novel engine of war. Some swift river-boats were chosen, which were strengthened by heavy timbers, run fore and aft, and so fastened that the boat was really converted into a battering-ram, propelled by steam. The opinion of Admiral Porter, in regard to the services of these rams and of their enterprising commander, is expressed in the following brief letter to the Secretary:

UNITED STATES MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, *January 5, 1863.*

SIR: In my different communications relating to the operations on the Yazoo River I omitted to mention the services of the ram-fleet. I intended to have made a separate report, but have been unable to do so sooner.

From his first connection with this squadron, Colonel Charles Rivers

Ellet, the immediate commander of the ram fleet, has displayed great zeal in carrying out my orders, and when we have been threatened at different points, and having no vessel to send from Cairo, he has, on two occasions, furnished vessels at an hour's notice. When the expedition started down the river, the ram-fleet was with us, and our main dependence in case we should encounter other rams. We had none of the Navy proper. Although like ourselves, half manned, the ram-fleet was ready to do any thing required of it. In ascending the river, the Queen of the West, Captain E. K. Sutherland and Master J. O. Reiley, were very efficient in repelling the sharpshooters, their construction enabling them to fire over the banks, which our iron-clads could not do. Captain Sutherland kept unceasing watch in advance of the fleet while our boats were at work, and won golden opinions for his assiduity. On the night of the 31st of December, when it was intended to assault the batteries by land and water, Colonel Ellet took upon himself the perilous duty of running up in the Lioness, in face of the batteries, to clear out the torpedoes or break the wires, and to plant torpedoes on the raft which had a battery at each end of it. No doubt he would have performed it or lost his life and his vessel. I have great confidence in the commander of the rams and those under him, and take this opportunity to state to the Department how highly I appreciate the commander and his associates.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### OPERATIONS OF ADMIRAL PORTER'S SQUADRON ON RED RIVER AND WHITE RIVER.

BETWEEN the time when the army was repulsed at the Chickasaw Bluff, at Vicksburg, and the completion of the combinations which were being formed for the reduction of that place, it was deemed advisable to make a joint army and navy expedition up the Red River into Arkansas.

The Arkansas River traverses that State from northwest to southeast, and formed a convenient base for many dangerous operations against our line of communications on the Mississippi. Among the fortified positions on this river which formed points of support for the rebels, was one called Fort Hindman or Arkansas Post, fifty miles from the mouth of the river, and a little more than one hundred miles below Little Rock, the capital of the State. The object of the expedition was to capture this fort, open the way to Little Rock, and thus obtain the control of the Arkansas River. Fort Hindman was a very strong, bastioned work, constructed at the head of a horseshoe bend on a high bluff which here comes to the river, and for some distance forms its left bank. The fort had four bastioned fronts, and enclosed a space about three hundred feet square. Across a neck of level ground, a line of rifle-pits extended three-quarters of a mile. There were fourteen guns mounted, some of them 8-inch and 9-inch pieces, some Parrott rifles, and some howitzers. The casemates were protected by railroad iron. The garrison consisted of about five thousand men, under the command of Brigadier-General Churchill. This brief description shows that it was a very formidable work. Its position on the bluff gave it

the advantage of a plunging fire on the gunboats, while the artillery and rifle-pits swept the level ground in the rear, over which an assaulting force would be compelled to march. In addition to these, heavy earthworks were thrown up on the levee. The severity of the fighting between the vessels and gunboats and the batteries and forts on the river has not been properly estimated—for two reasons: first, before the main battles on the rivers were fought, the people had become somewhat familiar with the scenes of the war, and the report of a bloody fight made less impression than in the beginning; and second, our ideas of a naval battle had all been formed from conflicts on the open water, and we were not prepared to judge aright the difficulties of manœuvring a war-vessel in the swift, tortuous currents of a narrow river. For instance, in Du Pont's brilliant engagement with the forts at Hilton Head, he could choose his distance and position, his vessels were constantly under headway, presenting only a movable mark to the rebel gunners, and he fought against open works in which many of the guns were mounted en barbette, and none of them in casemates. Forts Jackson and St. Philip, below New Orleans, on the contrary, were casemated works, and these casemates were immensely strong, and the passing vessels, instead of being able to choose their distance, were compelled to follow the winding channel, even when it carried them under the guns of the forts.

At most of the fortified places above New Orleans the guns were so mounted behind the high levee-banks, or in places cut out in the cliffs or on the high bluffs, that they could not be reached from the ships by any effective fire, while they were fully exposed.

At Fort Hindman the gunboats fought a work where the guns were in casemates, protected by railroad iron, and where, on account of the narrow channel, they could make very little change in position, and presented therefore almost a stationary mark, while their broadside guns could not be freely used. To offset these disadvantages, the attacking gunboats were mostly iron-clads.

The expedition ascended the river on the 9th of January as far as a point four miles from the fort, where the army landed. While the troops were making a detour to invest the fort, the

iron-clads were sent up to get the range of their guns, and the Rattler and Black Hawk were also ordered to clear out the rifle-pits and dislodge the troops that were behind the embankment on the levee. This was quickly accomplished by a few fires from the gunboats. About 2 o'clock Admiral Porter was informed that the troops would soon be in position to assault the main work. At half-past 5 p. m. word was sent that all was ready, and the Louisville, Baron De Kalb, and Cincinnati advanced within less than one-fourth of a mile and opened fire, which was answered at this short distance by three heavy smooth-bores, eight rifled guns, and musketry. The fire from the gunboats was a crushing one at that short distance, and that from the fort was also very severe and destructive while it lasted, but the batteries were soon overpowered and silenced for the time. The three iron-clads, Baron De Kalb, Louisville, and Cincinnati, led the attack, and then the lighter vessels were brought up, partially sheltered by the smoke, and they also joined in the fight. By this fire nearly all the artillery horses in and about the fort were killed, and the field-batteries of the rebels crippled. When the fire of the heavy guns had mostly ceased, the light-draught iron-clad Rattler was sent up past the fort in order to enfilade it. In doing this, the small steamer was badly cut up. The cabin was smashed in pieces, and a heavy shell raked her from stem to stern. Getting entangled in the snags of the narrow river, the Rattler was obliged to retreat. The army not deeming it prudent to venture an assault, the firing ceased, and the gunboats dropped down out of range and tied up to the bank for the night. In the morning the attack was renewed; the gunboats all being engaged as before, the heavy broadsides evidently smashing in the casemates and dismounting the guns, while some of the lighter vessels and the ram Monarch were sent up past the fort to cut off the retreat of the garrison. The fire of the gunboats was now literally knocking the fort in pieces, and rendering it both defenceless and untenable. That portion of the garrison not needed to work the guns were occupying the defensive works in the rear which our troops were preparing to assault. One attempt had been made, which had been checked by the severe fire from the field-artillery and musketry of the rebels, who were well protected, and a severe contest

was then kept up, in which our loss was severe. At this time the guns were all dismounted or disabled on the fort, and our troops were preparing for a second assault, when a double surrender was made. General Churchill, in the rear of the fort, surrendered to the army, while Colonel Dunnington, who commanded the fort, gave up his sword (choosing to do this) to Admiral Porter.

The army reported in this engagement nearly one thousand men killed, wounded, and missing. About five thousand men were surrendered as prisoners, seventeen pieces of artillery, three thousand small-arms, a large quantity of ammunition, and five hundred and sixty-three animals were taken possession of by the army. The appearance of the casemates of the fort, before and after the battle, is represented by the accompanying plates, from a sketch made on the spot.



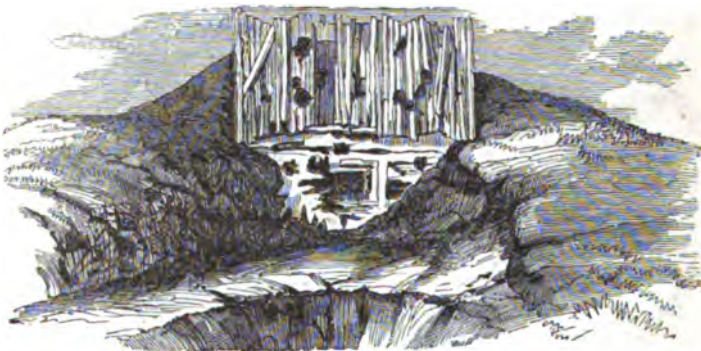
APPEARANCE OF CASEMATES BEFORE THE ATTACK, COVERED WITH RAILROAD IRON.

Some thirty men were killed and wounded on the fleet, and the gunboats were severely cut up, but not disabled, nor was their machinery injured. Soon after this a small force was sent up the White River to capture a fort at St. Charles, as this would give almost complete control of the waters of Arkansas. The gunboats found the post evacuated, and as the rebels had gone up the river in an army transport which they had captured, and had taken with them two fine 8-inch guns and carriages, it was thought best to pursue them, and the Baron De Kalb was





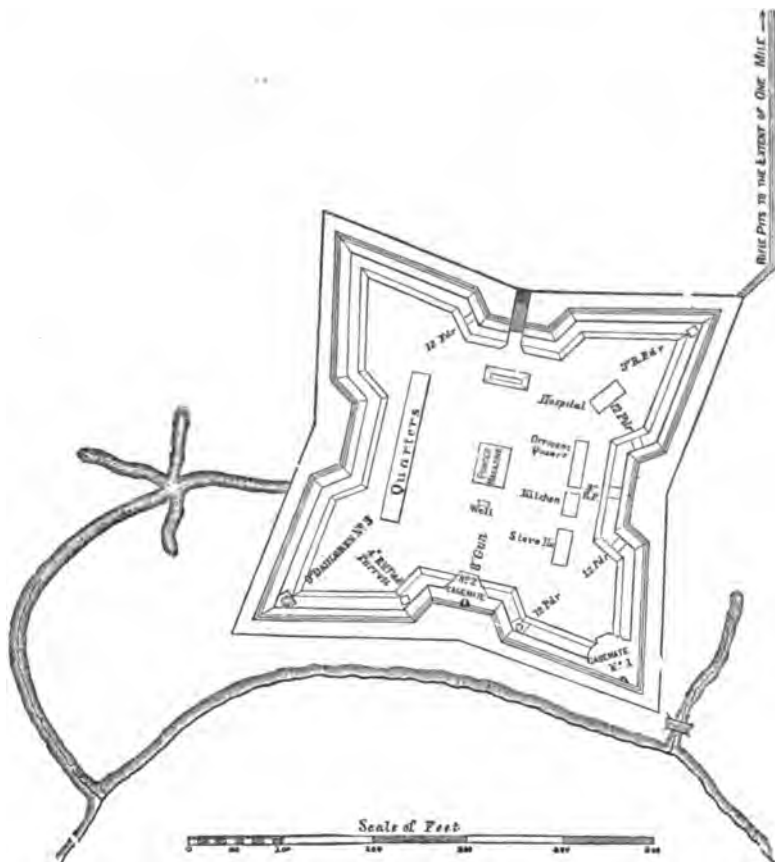
CASEMATE No. 1, DESTROYED BY THE U. S. GUNBOAT BARON DE KALB.



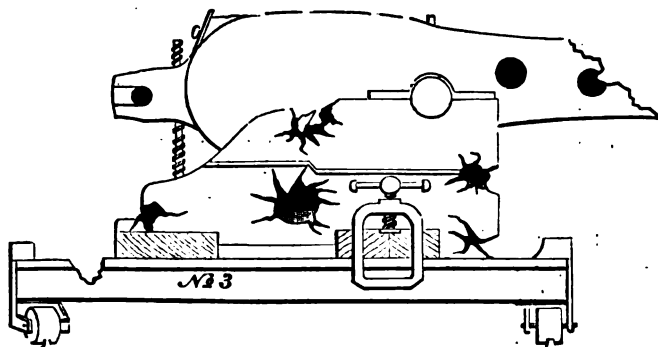
CASEMATE No. 2, DESTROYED BY THE U. S. GUNBOAT LOUISVILLE.



REAR VIEW OF CASEMATE No. 2.



**VIEW OF FORT HINDMAN, ARKANSAS POST.**



**APPEARANCE OF NINE-INCH GUN SILENCED BY THE CINCINNATI.**

sent up the river. The following brief letter describes the result:

U. S. GUNBOAT BARON DE KALB, MISSISSIPPI RIVER, *January 22, 1863.*

SIR: On the 18th I received your letter, directing me, if General Gorman would furnish a detachment of troops, to push up White River, and endeavor to capture or destroy the Blue Wing and other steamers. General Gorman gave me the troops, and I was about starting, when orders from Generals Curtis and Grant obliged him to withdraw his troops from the river, and prevented the expedition. I therefore followed the transports down the river. Before leaving Duvall's Bluff, the depot-building and cars were set on fire by the troops. The wood of which the depot was built was green cypress, and covered with snow. Seeing that but little damage was likely to be done by the fire, I sent an officer and boat's crew, who cut away the upright timbers, and bending a line to the building, pulled it down and burned it. At the same time the chief-engineer, with a party of men with sledges, broke the car-wheels and journals to pieces, utterly ruining them. The cars were also burned.

On my way down I remained at Clarendon until the cavalry force there started for Helena. At St. Charles I assisted an officer of General Hovey's staff to blow up the magazine, using the powder I captured at Des Arc. The iron gun-slides I threw upon the burning timber of the casemates. I believe every thing of use to the enemy at St. Charles that could be destroyed was destroyed by the army or ourselves.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN G. WALKER, *Lieutenant-Commander U. S. Navy.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

At the same time the rebels were active upon the upper rivers, the Cumberland and Tennessee; striving to intercept the communications of General Rosecrans, and to cut off his supplies. Admiral Porter was compelled to keep a watchful eye over the operations in that quarter also. A letter from S. L. Phelps shows the condition of affairs on these rivers, and what one portion of the river navy was doing in January, 1863:

OFFICE OF MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, CAIRO, ILL., *January 30, 1863.*

SIR: In obedience to your order, I proceeded up the Cumberland River with the gunboat Lexington to Nashville, Tennessee, and returned to this place last night. Meeting with a transport that had been fired upon by artillery, twenty miles above Clarksville, I at once went to that

point; and, landing, burned a storehouse used by the rebels as a resort and cover. On leaving there to descend to Clarksville, where I had passed a fleet of twenty-one steamers, with numerous barges in tow, convoyed by three light-draught gunboats, under Lieutenant-Commander Fitch, the Lexington was fired upon by the enemy, who had two Parrott guns, and struck three times; but the rebels were quickly dislodged and dispersed.

I then returned to Clarksville, and, agreeably to the arrangement already made by Lieutenant-Commander Fitch, left that place at midnight, with the whole fleet of boats, and reached Nashville the following night without so much as a musket-shot having been fired upon a single vessel of the fleet. Doubtless the lesson of the previous day had effected this result.

From the best information to be had, it appears that the rebels have a number of guns, with a considerable covering force, extending along Harpeth Shoals, a distance of some eight or ten miles. This force can readily operate upon both the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. Besides these guns, the enemy also has several pieces above Savannah, on the Tennessee. No steamer should be permitted to run on either river, above Forts Henry and Donelson, without the convoy of a gunboat. Lieutenant-Commander Fitch has not, at present, an adequate force to protect Government transports upon the two streams, and I would suggest the propriety of sending him the Lexington. Her heavy guns have great effect with the rebels, and while they will fire upon vessels immediately under the howitzers of the light-draught gunboats, they will not show themselves where the heavier gunboats are. I have no doubt, with the aid of the Lexington, Captain Fitch will be able effectually to protect all the Government vessels in those rivers.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. L. PHELPS, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

Captain A. M. PENNOCK, U. S. N.,

*Fleet-Captain and Commandant of Station, Cairo, Ill.*

These desultory expeditions not only show the constant activity of the Navy on the Western rivers, but they demonstrate that no important movement of the army was even possible without the assistance and protection of the gunboats. Without this novel iron-clad fleet, not one successful step could have been taken toward opening the Mississippi. This fleet was like the Monitors, a new creation brought forth by the exigencies of the war.

The movements which have just been described bring us to the verge of more serious operations. The Government, far from abandoning the idea of capturing Vicksburg on account of the many reverses which had been met with there, collected its strength for a final effort. In January, 1863, when General Grant took command of the army at Milliken's Bend, Vicksburg was probably the strongest place on the continent. When Admiral Farragut first went up to this town after the capture of the New Orleans forts, there were only five guns mounted. A few thousand men could have captured it with perfect ease, and it could have been held against all attacks, and thus the great river would have been opened more than a year earlier than it was.

Looking back upon the situation as it then was, it seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that, if the War Department had comprehended then the actual condition of affairs, and had furnished to the Navy a proper supporting force on the Mississippi, the war might have been terminated before the close of 1862. Had the Mississippi been at that time completely opened, its strong points occupied, and its whole length thoroughly patrolled by our gunboats, it is difficult to perceive how the rebels could have kept their armies in the field another year.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### VARIOUS PLANS FOR APPROACHING VICKSBURG IN THE REAR.

IN the spring of 1863 the defences of Vicksburg were such as to require for their reduction a combination of all the mightiest forces of modern war. The river-front of the city literally bristled with heavy guns, crowning the crests of the high bluffs, and planted also at every point on the slope of the hills where a gun could be securely mounted, and ending with a long line of batteries nearly on a level with the water.

On the north of the city, at Drumgould's Bluff and Haines's Bluff, on the Yazoo River, were very strong batteries, which prevented an army from passing to the rear of the city in that direction, while the unsuccessful attempt of Sherman across the low, marshy ground between the Yazoo and the Chickasaw Bluffs showed that the rebel lines could not be penetrated there. In the rear the city was defended by earthworks, batteries, and a strong abatis. These works were held by an army of thirty-five thousand men, under General Pemberton, and another strong body was being organized which, under General J. Johnston, was intended to prevent a force from approaching from any direction the rear of Vicksburg. It was indeed almost an impregnable stronghold.

The army, under General Grant, took its position on Young's Point, opposite Vicksburg, in January. It was quite evident that a successful attack from the front was impossible. The rebel batteries could not be reached by the guns of the fleet, nor could any landing be made there by the troops. An attack had been made from the Yazoo, and had been repulsed with severe loss. There were no vessels below Vicksburg by which

the army could be taken over the Mississippi so as to pass up to the rear of the city from below, and the grim batteries forbade the passage of the fleet. To remain on Young's Point, hopelessly gazing up at defiant Vicksburg was, of course, not long to be endured. It was clear that in some manner the army must reach the rear of the town, or its capture would be impossible. How to make such a movement was a question which was to be solved only after long and most painful experiments.

Four separate projects were presented for effecting this purpose. Two of these proposed to pass around the batteries of Vicksburg, and, crossing the Mississippi, march up and invest the city in the rear. Two others presented the idea of getting above the Yazoo batteries, so as to come down upon the rear from the west and north. One plan for getting below the city was by the canal, across the neck of land called Young's Point, on which the army lay, by which the gunboats and army transports could pass and come out below the fortifications. This work was begun by General Williams, under the orders of General Butler. General Grant undertook to finish this work, but it failed to answer the intended purpose, not even a coal-barge, as was said, having been taken through.

A second plan for getting below the batteries was, to connect the Mississippi by a canal with Lake Providence. This lake connects with the Tensas, a navigable stream which runs into the Washita, and this empties into Red River, and thus the fleet, as was thought, might pass around Vicksburg, and out into the great river below. This plan seemed a feasible one, but still it failed.

Far above Vicksburg, near Helena, at a place called Delta, is what is called the Old Yazoo Pass. This pass once connected the Tallahatchie with the Mississippi, and through the Tallahatchie the Yazoo was reached, and boats going down, destined for Yazoo City, often passed through this channel instead of following the Mississippi to the mouth of the Yazoo, and then going up the latter river. This channel had been closed, for the purpose of reclaiming large tracts of land that were lying under water. It was thought that by opening anew this old channel, the gunboats could be carried across into the Yazoo, and thus, by convoying the army transports, troops could be sent around

to the rear of Vicksburg, while at the same time they would be able to cut off a portion of the supplies furnished from that region of country, both for Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

Another plan still was, to pass from the Mississippi into Steel's Bayou and Deer Creek, just above Milliken's Bend, thence northward by a series of bayous and connecting creeks to Rolling Fork, and from this into the Big Sunflower, which, by good navigation, leads into the Yazoo above Haines's Bluff. By this route also an expedition, if successful, would be able to reach the rear of Vicksburg by passing round the forts on the Yazoo.

These four plans serve not only to set in a strong light the extreme difficulties which were encountered by the army and navy before Vicksburg, but it shows the intense activity and far-reaching enterprise of our officers and their determination to capture the river fortress if it lay within the reach of human effort. They were resolved that nothing should be left untried which skill and experience could suggest, or toil, or courage, or perseverance could accomplish. Two of these expeditions, intended to reach the rear of the city from the north, were among the most novel and romantic operations of the war, and deserve particular mention from the historian, as showing what Americans on both sides were capable of doing. In February, General Grant and Admiral Porter decided to make an attempt on Vicksburg, by the way of the Yazoo Pass. For this purpose a company of men were sent up from the army to make the necessary excavations, and a steamboat was dispatched from the fleet to enter the pass so soon as it should be practicable. The water in the Mississippi, at Delta, was about nine feet higher than the adjacent country; and as soon as the levee was cut, it rushed through with tremendous force, sweeping every thing before it, and cutting a channel nearly two hundred and fifty feet wide, through which the great river poured with a heavy roar—a deep, swift stream carrying desolation to the surrounding country, which ere long was all afloat, and channels were rapidly formed, along which the boats could float. When the water had reached its level, or nearly so, the iron-clads *Chillicothe* and *De Kalb*, and five light-draught boats, were fitted out and sent up to enter the pass, under the command of



Lieutenant Watson Smith. The fleet found no difficulty in reaching the Tallahatchie by the new-made channel, and then the way was open, as they supposed, into the Yazoo. But their progress was somewhat slower than was anticipated by the projectors of the expedition, and it failed therefore to be a surprise. At a point near a place called Greenwood, the Tallahatchie and Yazoo approach very near to each other, and on this neck the rebels hastily threw up an earthwork, which they named Fort Pemberton.

At this spot the rebels, with great activity, had mounted some heavy rifled guns, and were well prepared to dispute the passage of the gunboats. It was found impossible to land any troops where the rebels had blockaded the river, and the commander of the force sent to coöperate with the fleet, not anticipating this extemporized fort, was not provided with any heavy siege-guns. The land force could therefore effect nothing. On the 11th of March the gunboats advanced to attack the fort. The detailed accounts of the operations before the fort, as given by the two commanders of the expedition, will be more satisfactory to the reader than any mere general statement, and therefore they are inserted here. Lieutenant Watson Smith, who at first commanded the fleet, but was taken sick soon after he reached the fort, gives the following report :

U. S. SHIP *BATTLE*, TALLAHATCHIE RIVER, *March* 11, 1863.

SIR : Stood on this morning to within a mile of the battery, and went ahead with General Rush, in the *Chillicothe*, to observe. A turn brought us within view of the enemy's works ; almost immediately they opened fire from five guns. One shell struck the *Chillicothe* on the starboard side of the starboard forward port, damaging the plate, and breaking and starting several bolts ; another struck on the port side, ahead, six inches above water—a conical rifle-shot, making as great an indentation as possible without breaking through ; another glanced from the deck. Captain Foster, in reply, threw three shells from his 11-inch guns. With this knowledge of their strength and position, we then turned the point, until covered by the trees, and arranged to advance as soon as the army should report ready, which would not be until morning. In the afternoon the rebels appeared to be shipping cattle and goods from the battery, which we believed to be indications that they were preparing to leave.

Advanced the Chillicothe, the De Kalb following, the Lioness in readiness, and was about to bring up the Rattler, but going on board the Chillicothe, found her already much injured by the shot of the enemy, one of which struck between the slide covers of the port forward port, which was at the time sufficiently ajar to allow the rammer-handle to pass out. The men were in the act of sending the shell down when this shell striking the Chillicothe's shell, both exploded (fragments of each being found), killing two men and wounding eleven others, three of them perhaps mortally. The 11-inch was struck on the muzzle, damaging, but not disabling it; the slide-covers of this port were blown off, one going overboard. Other shots struck, killing one man. The Chillicothe and De Kalb were strengthening themselves with cotton when advanced, and I now withdrew them for the purpose of completing that defence. The short distance, and the stream being narrow, prevents the easy use of two vessels upon the fort. I have, therefore, landed the 50-pounder Parrott gun from the broadside of this vessel; and, with the assistance of the troops, expect to have it in position to annoy the rebels' best gun, at about six hundred yards, by morning, and well protected by cotton and earth. Of the seven shells fired by the Chillicothe, two appeared to burst well, and two to strike a steamboat lying just beyond the fort below Greenwood. There is a steamer sunk there by the rebels, not quite in position desired by them.

A rebel called over this afternoon, stating that they had a vessel ready for the Chillicothe. She will be guarded, and, if boarded, will, if possible, be swept by our own vessels, her crew going below. This is different from engaging with head up-stream. The Chillicothe works well, but the De Kalb and other stern-wheels are very awkward. The base of a rifle-shell, measuring  $6\frac{1}{2}$  inches, shows the size of one of their guns; another seems like a sixty-eight; another a  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch rifle.

Mr. Morton, the pilot, was badly blown by the explosion of the shells on board the Chillicothe; he is not seriously injured, and will soon be on duty.

I shall use all the means we have of silencing this battery—the mortar, with the others, when it arrives. The Chillicothe's turret is not well backed: neither she nor the De Kalb can stand those rifled shot.

I have not ascertained sufficiently about the raft to speak of it with certainty.

My letter of yesterday acquaints you with our situation as regards provisions and fuel. Those of us that are but partly manned feel the want of men; the soldiers serve the guns well, but the others are needed. It is with difficulty that the small boats can be manned.

The small army steamer has arrived, not having been interfered with by guerillas.

*Midnight.*—The rebels are busy at something; don't think they are leaving. The Yallahusha is probably fortified at each bluff, as they feared for Granada. I am obliged to keep steam now at night, which is exhausting to the coal.

Respectfully yours,

WATSON SMITH, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

On the 18th of March, on account of the sickness of Lieutenant Smith, Lieutenant Foster took the command, and his account completes the narrative of an expedition from which much was expected, but which accomplished very little. The gunboats were badly cut up, and many of their crews were killed and wounded. The naval officers claim that the fort was silenced, and that it could have been carried by an assault; but the difficulty of making an assault was very great, and the officer commanding the troops did not see fit to take the risk. It seems to have been one of those failures which human foresight cannot prevent, and for which no one desires to be held responsible. Lieutenant Foster's letter is as follows:

U. S. STEAMER CHILlicothe, April 13, 1863.

SIR: On the 18th of March, in consequence of the ill-health of Lieutenant-Commander Watson Smith, I fell into the command of the Yazoo Pass expedition, and have to make the following report:

The orders which were turned over to me by Lieutenant-Commander Smith were positive, and urged the necessity of pushing on, urging him by no means to delay, as the success of the expedition depended entirely upon the rapidity of the movement. Had these instructions been carried out, I have no doubt that the expedition would have been successful, and that we would have reached Yazoo City in half the time that we were in making Fort Pemberton; and as there was no opposition at that time of sufficient force to check us, we would have had complete control of the river, with all their steamers at our mercy.

Success here, and the controlling power of the Cold Water, Tallahatchie, Yallahusha, and Yazoo Rivers, would, in my opinion, have opened a sure road to Vicksburg, as it is by these rivers that they receive most of their supplies.

The first attack made on Fort Pemberton was on the 11th of March, on a reconnoissance, about 11 A. M., when five or six shots were ex-

changed, doing little or no damage. On the afternoon of the same day the Chillicothe again went down and opened fire on the fort. During the action the Chillicothe had four men killed and fifteen wounded; after having a whole gun's crew disabled, the Chillicothe withdrew.

The Chillicothe is a perfect failure as a fighting vessel, and will have to be repaired before going into action again.

On the 13th the Chillicothe and Baron De Kalb got under way at 11.30 A. M., and, commenced the attack on Fort Pemberton, at seven hundred and eighty yards. The Chillicothe remained in action one hour and thirty-eight minutes. During this action she received forty-four shots; and, after expending nearly all her ammunition of 5-inch and 10-inch shells, retired by order of the commanding officer. On the retiring of the Chillicothe, the fort ceased firing, although the De Kalb remained, and kept firing slowly during the remainder of the day.

Deserters and prisoners captured reported that their guns were silenced, and that the fort would have been taken had our forces advanced, as they were entirely without ammunition.

On the 18th we retired, believing the fort too strong for the forces there engaged, and being short of ammunition.

The day after leaving Fort Pemberton, the Chillicothe, De Kalb, light-draughts, etc., arrived before the fort again; and at the suggestion of General Quimby the Chillicothe took her old position before the fort, firing three shots for the purpose of drawing the enemy's fire; failing in this, she withdrew. We, along with those on shore, were under the impression that the enemy blew up a torpedo just forward the Chillicothe's bow. We remained twelve days waiting for the army to do something; and when General Quimby was ordered to withdraw his forces, we brought up the rear. We captured five prisoners, three of whom I have paroled at Helena; the remaining two I shall send to you.

On our return to the fort we remained twelve days, and during the whole of that time nothing was done by General Quimby toward the reduction of the fort. On meeting General Quimby, I told him that it was impossible to take the fort without heavy siege-guns; he said that he had a number of heavy 24-pounders, and would procure others without delay, and expressed his entire confidence as to the capture of Fort Pemberton. I then, at his earnest and written request (a copy of which I have sent you), returned with him, and remained until the army was ordered to withdraw. The cotton captured and destroyed is about four to five thousand bales.

The Yazoo Pass, Coldwater, and Tallahatchie, at the present, are in good condition, and no difficulty is experienced in their navigation.

The enemy burnt two large steamers, the *Thirty-fifth Parallel* (supposed to have on board two thousand five hundred bales of cotton) and the *Magnolia*, cargo reported to be cotton. In addition to these, they sunk the *Star of the West* near the fort. The enemy lost, by his own acknowledgment, twelve men in killed and wounded.

The gunboats, had they pushed on even after the delay at Helena, would have reached Fort Pemberton before a spade was put in the ground for its erection.

In conclusion, let me again say, had the expedition been carried out as it was originally planned, and had not the army detained us by the slowness of their movements, the expedition would have been a complete success.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES P. FOSTER, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral* DAVID D. PORTER,

*commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

At the date of this letter, all the four plans for getting to the rear of Vicksburg had failed. Almost incredible labors had been performed, and very many valuable lives had been lost in the various skirmishes, and through diseases contracted by working in the canals and marshes, in the burning sun and pestilential air, and yet nothing had been gained. The country had become impatient, the rebels were confident and defiant, and a feeling of weariness, perhaps partial discouragement, was manifesting itself in the army. So many plans had failed, and Vicksburg growing constantly stronger, that confidence was somewhat impaired. At Port Hudson, also, the army seemed to be making little, if any progress, and affairs did not wear a very encouraging aspect. Still the determination of the officers, both of the Army and Navy, was unshaken. Such scenes seem only to bring out the qualities of heroic commanders. A man cannot appear great except under the pressure of a great occasion. Nor was there any demoralization of the soldiers or sailors.

Here, as in many other similar scenes, was shown the immense superiority of an army composed of intelligent men, accustomed to think for themselves, and face difficulties of their own. They understood the character and designs of these

several expeditions, and they could estimate correctly the causes of the failure. Such men do not infer that all efforts must necessarily fail, because one or more have been defeated, and often defeat will give them confidence in a new plan, if it commends itself to their judgment.

One of the four schemes has not as yet been described—that which proposed to gain access to the city by passing through Steele's Bayou, and the connecting channels, into Rolling Fork, the Sunflower, and the Yazoo.



## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE EXPEDITION UP STEELE'S BAYOU AND DEER CREEK.

By the cutting of the levee at Delta, near Helena, and turning a portion of the Mississippi once more into the old Yazoo Pass, the country below was flooded, and every creek, old water-course, bayou, and morass was so filled as to offer navigable water where only a canoe could have floated before. Admiral Porter, ever fertile in expedients, conceived the idea of taking some of the gunboats from the Yazoo, up a series of bayous and creeks, which, as he hoped, would give an entrance into a stream called Rolling Fork, from which they could pass into the Yazoo by one of its tributaries, and thus the army could be taken above and around the Yazoo forts. To ascertain the practicability of this plan, Admiral Porter made a reconnoissance in person, with Lieutenant Murphy, up "Steele's Bayou," which at low stages of water is little more than a ditch. They found in it five fathoms of water, and followed it thirty miles, to Black Bayou, which was so thickly overgrown, that it seemed at first a perfect barrier to further progress. They found, however, upon a more careful examination, that, by removing the trees, a passage might be opened, and they thought that, though the channel was very narrow and very crooked, they could heave the gunboats round the short bends, and thus force them through. Beyond this, as they heard, the difficulty of navigation would not be so great.

The chief officers of the Army having considered this plan, gave it their approval, and on the 14th of March a fleet started on this novel voyage, consisting of the following vessels: the Louisville, Lieutenant Owen; the Cincinnati, Lieutenant Bache, the Carondelet, Lieutenant Murphy; the Mound City,



Lieutenant Wilson; the Pittsburg, Lieutenant Hart—four mortar-vessels, and four tugs. Mr. Lincoln's quaint phrase, "web-footed gunboats," was scarcely a misnomer or exaggeration, as applied to this fleet. It was sailing where only web-footed or amphibious creatures had passed before, the channels and morasses which were the proper homes of wild-fowl, otters, and muskrats. They went forward with little difficulty until they came to Black Bayou, where the crews of the vessels began the wearisome task of clearing the way. The trees stood thick in the water, not permitting the gunboats to pass between them, and every possible expedient was used to remove them. There was urgent need of haste, for the rebels could easily obstruct the narrow channels ahead by felling trees; and large bodies of troops could be gathered to oppose them so soon as they should be discovered.

They pulled up some of the trees by the roots with hawsers, some they cut off under the water, and some they pushed down by running against them with the iron-clads, and then opening a way through them by cutting off the branches. Thus, by incessant and most exhausting labor in the mud and water for twenty-four hours, the fleet worked its way four miles through the bayou and into Deer Creek, when it was hoped that the main difficulties of the expedition had been overcome. Here General Sherman joined them with a small portion of his command; and as, by the line which the troops would take, it was only twelve miles to Rolling Fork, while the gunboats would have to steam thirty-two miles to reach the same point, Admiral Porter determined to push the fleet on as quickly as possible.

The channel of Deer Creek was much narrower than was expected, and it was, moreover, filled with small willows, whose lithe trunks and overhanging and interlaced branches reduced the rate of movement to one mile per hour. They had now reached a settled country; and the inhabitants looked on with as much amazement as if the fleet had sailed down from the clouds. No one had ever thought that a vessel of any kind, much less an armed iron-clad gunboat, could reach that inland spot. The people, black and white, flocked down in multitudes to see the strange spectacle, the negroes exulting, as usual, at the sight of the "Linkum gunboats."

At this point the expedition was discovered by a rebel official, and he at once hurried from the place, and set fire to all the cotton near, whether public or private property, so far as he could control it by his orders. As quickly as the torch could be applied, the country on both sides of the creek along which they were advancing was ablaze with fires, and not only was the cotton consumed, but many dwellings also were needlessly destroyed. There was no intention to take or injure private property, and there was not the least occasion for the havoc which was made. There were some owners of cotton who refused to obey the order to burn, and their property was thus preserved. The expedition had thus penetrated almost to the heart of the Yazoo country before it was discovered, and as its purpose was then known, it became necessary to push forward as rapidly as possible, that there might be no opportunity of obstructing the passages ahead. With all their labor, however, their advance was only at the rate of half a mile an hour.

The country through which they were passing at this point was a beautiful one, filled with stock of all kinds, and containing many large collections of grain and various supplies belonging to the rebel government, and it was evidently one of the important sources from which subsistence was drawn for the troops in and around Vicksburg. After long and exhausting labors of the character already described, the vessels, by what might be called *land and water* navigation, reached a point only seven miles from Rolling Fork, where the passage would be unobstructed, and from which they could pass first into the Sunflower, and then into the Yazoo.

Here the first consequences of being discovered were seen. The rebel agents had gathered the citizens and negroes, and were engaged ahead in cutting down trees across the channel. It was a moment both of great excitement and great peril, for if the fleet could be stopped even for a short time, troops and field-artillery could be collected, so as to endanger, if not capture, the gunboats, for they might hem them in by obstacles placed both before and in the rear, and fire upon them at their leisure from positions which the guns of the fleet could not reach.

None of the troops had yet come up, and they were very

much in the condition of a large fish ashore, helpless. A tug, the *Thistle*, was immediately sent ahead with a howitzer, to clear the way, and she reached the choppers before they had felled the first tree. But they rushed on to a spot ahead of the vessel, and beyond the reach of her gun, and plying their axes vigorously, brought down a large tree right across the channel; and the voyage of the tug was brought to an end.

The negroes were very unwilling to aid in thus *fencing in* "Massa Linkum's" boats; but the whites held loaded muskets at them, and compelled them to work until it was thought that trees enough were laid across the creek effectually to prevent all further advance.

Here was indeed a perplexing state of affairs. There was nothing to prevent the enemy from placing similar obstructions across the channel in the rear of the fleet, and then the gunboats would be truly in prison, for no portion of our army had yet come up, and an overwhelming force might easily gather both in front and rear. No hope of escape remained but in an earnest attempt to force a passage through into Rolling Fork, and it was evident that what was to be done must be done quickly.

With unflagging courage and energy the sailors undertook once more the heavy and perilous task of clearing out obstructions, and the crews of the beleaguered boats wrought steadily night and day, not pausing to eat or sleep even, until the task was done. As yet, no signs of the army. The troops had been advancing as rapidly as possible; but unforeseen difficulties had beset them also, and the boats, slow as their progress was, had gone on faster than the officers of the army expected. The vessels pushed on through the creek until within three miles of Rolling Fork, when smoke was seen in the direction of the Yazoo, and Admiral Porter was informed that rebel troops were already landing to arrest their progress. The guns of the coming enemy were not so much to be feared as the axes they might use in felling trees into the channel of Rolling Fork. Lieutenant Murphy was, therefore, sent forward, with three hundred men and two howitzers, to hold Rolling Fork until the gunboats could come up. He went ahead and took possession of an Indian mound, which commanded the country for

some distance round. All night, once more, the crews toiled at the well-nigh deadly work of clearing obstructions in the narrow, muddy creek. Morning found them only eight hundred yards from the more open water of Rolling Fork. By this time the men were so exhausted, that they rested for a time. They had then to work their way through a *water-lane* overgrown with willows, and these were too large to be borne down, and too lithe to be broken, and therefore it was necessary to pull them one by one, or cut them off below the surface, a slow and tedious process.

While this was going slowly on, the rebels had landed about eight hundred men and seven pieces of artillery, and had begun to fire upon the party which had gone forward with the howitzers. At this time, also, news came that the rebels were cutting down trees in the rear of the boats; and that a body of five thousand men had embarked at Haines's Bluff, and were coming up the Yazoo, and as yet none of our own troops had arrived. At sunset of that day, the rebels opened a cross-fire upon the gunboats from the woods, with six rifled guns. Some of the negroes who had been compelled to cut down trees in their rear escaped, and gave notice of what was being done; and as there was no indication of the approach of our own troops, the order was given for the vessels to retreat. The rebels took possession of the Indian mound, and opened fire on the Carondelet and Cincinnati; but the gunboats soon silenced the battery, and they then were free except from the sharpshooters, who fired from every spot where a rifleman could be concealed. Few, however, of the crews were hurt. On the 20th of March they met Colonel Smith, with a detachment of troops, coming to their assistance; and Admiral Porter's feelings at this meeting and his views of the situation are shown in the following:

On the 21st we fell in with Colonel Smith, commanding Eighth Missouri and other parts of regiments; we were quite pleased to see him, as I never knew before how much the comfort and safety of iron-clads, situated as we were, depended on the soldiers. I had already sent out behind a force of three hundred men to stop the felling of trees in our rear, which Colonel Smith now took charge of. The enemy had already felled over forty heavy trees, which Lieutenant-Commander Owen, in the

Louisville, working night and day, cleared away almost fast enough to permit us to meet with no delay.

Colonel Smith's force was not enough to justify my making another effort to get through ; he had no artillery, and would frequently have to leave the vessels in following the roads.

On the 22d we came to a bend in the river, where the enemy supposed they had blockaded us completely, having cut a number of trees all together, and so intertwined that it seemed impossible to move them. The Louisville was at work at them, pulling them up, when we discovered about three thousand rebels attempting to pass the edge of the woods to our rear, while the negroes reported artillery coming up on our quarter. We were all ready for them, and when the artillery opened on us we opened such a fire on them that they scarcely waited to hitch up their horses. At the same time the rebel soldiers fell in with Colonel Smith's troops, and, after a sharp skirmish, fled before the fire of our soldiers. After this we were troubled no more, and dropped down quietly until we fell in with General Sherman, who, hearing the firing, was hurrying to our support. I do not know when I felt more pleased to see that gallant officer, for without the assistance of the troops we could not, without great loss, have performed the arduous work of clearing out the obstructions. We might now have retraced our steps, but we were all worn out. The officers and men had for six days and nights been constantly at work, or sleeping at the gun. We had lost our coal-barge, and the provision-vessel could not get through, being too high for such purposes.

Taking every thing into consideration, I thought it best to undertake nothing further, without being better prepared, and we finally, on the 24th, arrived at Hill's plantation, the place we started from on the 16th.

Altogether this has been a most novel expedition. Never did those people expect to see iron-clads floating where the keel of a flat-boat never passed. Though nothing has resulted from it, more than annoying the enemy and causing him to expend his resources, it has been of great service to the crews, and given me an insight into the character of the commanders and officers of the expedition. I must say that they deserve my warmest commendation for the perseverance and coolness they exhibited during the arduous undertaking. As to the iron-clads themselves, I beg leave to withdraw every thing I may have said to their disparagement, for I never yet saw vessels so well adapted to knocking down trees, hauling them up by the roots, or demolishing bridges ; we necessarily destroyed all that came in our way, and it has cut off for the present all the means of transporting provisions to Vicksburg.

We destroyed a large amount of Confederate corn, captured a large number of mules, horses, and cattle. The rebels themselves burnt over twenty thousand bales of cotton, and we burnt all that we found marked C. S. A.; have taken on our decks, and on the mortar-boats, enough to pay for the building of a good gunboat. . . .

I look upon it as a great misfortune that this expedition did not get through, for it would have been a most perfect surprise; would have thrown into our hands every vessel in the Yazoo, and every granary from which the rebels could draw a supply. The great difficulty seems to have been for want of more promptness in moving the troops, or rather, I should say, want of means for the moving of troops, for there were never yet any two men who would labor harder than Generals Grant and Sherman to forward an expedition for the overthrow of Vicksburg.

At one time I felt most uncomfortable, finding the enemy increasing in strength in front of me, cutting down trees behind me, and in front a chance of blocking up the feeders of the canal and letting the water out, and not a soldier of ours in sight, or (by the answers I received to my communication) any prospect of any coming in time to prevent a landing of the enemy. I never knew how helpless a thing an iron-clad could be when unsupported by troops; our guns were three feet below the levee; the woods stood just far enough back to enable the sharpshooters to pick off our men, without our being able to bother them, except with the mortars, which kept them off.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### TEXAN TROOPS BETWEEN NEW ORLEANS AND BATON ROUGE.— ALARM AT NEW ORLEANS.

TOWARD the close of the month of June, 1863, a large force of rebels from Texas, under the command of General Green, made its appearance on the Atchafalaya, crossed below Simmsport on that river, and approached the right bank of the Mississippi nearly opposite Port Hudson, evidently with the hope of creating a diversion. Failing in that, this rather formidable force threatened not only to cut off supplies by the river from New Orleans, but to attack that city.

Admiral Farragut, upon being informed of the movement of these rebel troops toward Plaquemine and Donaldsonville, left Port Hudson in the *Monongahela*, and, reaching the former place at night, found that the rebels had attacked it and burnt two steamers. Lieutenant-Commander Weaver, in the *Winona*, shelled the rebels out of Plaquemine, and, as they proceeded down the river toward Donaldsonville, followed them and gave warning of their approach. Arriving at Donaldsonville, the enemy, finding the force of gunboats strong, turned toward Brashear City. The *Winona* patrolled the river in the vicinity, occasionally shelling the passing rebels. Commander Woolsey was left to protect Donaldsonville, with the *Winona* and *Kineo* near by.

On the 27th of June the rebels notified the women and children at Donaldsonville to withdraw from the town. At 1.20 A. M. of the 28th the enemy attacked the fort; the storming-party, numbering about one hundred and twenty men, got inside, but by the rapid and well-directed fire of the *Princess*

Royal, and her consorts the Kineo and Winona, the enemy was not only driven off, but the men who succeeded in getting into the works were captured.

The excitement in New Orleans was intense at this time. With a very small force to repel attack, the army and navy at Port Hudson being dependent on that place for supplies by way of the river, the undisguised exultation of the rebel population, threats of capturing and abducting prominent officers to be held as hostages, and the thousands of absurd rumors put afloat to awe the Unionists, kept everybody in a state of feverish anxiety. Rebel spies in New Orleans flashed their signal-lights from point to point, on the banks of the river, to their approaching friends, and every movement of troops and vessels was speedily made known to the Texan host.

Captain Jenkins, Admiral Farragut's chief of staff, being ill of fever in New Orleans, was ordered, as soon as possible, to proceed to Port Hudson, to enable the admiral to return to New Orleans, to give his personal attention to affairs there in the existing excitement. On the evening of the 6th of July, Captain Jenkins went on board the *Monongahela* (Commander Abner Read), and proceeded up the river with the *New London* (Lieutenant-Commander Perkins), and the steam-tug *Ida*—all the vessels heavily laden with ammunition and other supplies for the army and fleet at Port Hudson. The enemy was known to be behind the levee on the right bank, and at every suitable point an attack was expected. The rebels had inaugurated a new system of tactics, that of forcing the negroes—men, women, and children—under the levee, near to the water, while they opened with their field-pieces and rifled muskets upon passing vessels. Authentic as the reports of this new practice of the enemy were, it was thought to be too horrible for belief. Yet, between 8 and 9 A. M. of the 7th of July, as the *Monongahela* came around the point (followed by the *New London* and *Ida*), about twelve miles below Donaldsonville, known as Buena Vista, or Madam Winchester's Plantation, this sign of the enemy's presence was seen. For a considerable distance the water-line of the river was occupied by negroes, and, as the *Monongahela* came within short range, the enemy opened with about fifteen rifled field-pieces and volleys from rifled muskets.



The fire was vigorously returned from the *Monongahela* and *New London*, after a moment's hesitation to fire so near the negroes. The *New London* and *Ida* being astern, and filled with powder and loaded shell, it became necessary for their protection that the *Monongahela* should stop her engines within two hundred yards of the enemy, to enable these vessels to come up and be protected by her. The *Monongahela* had barely lost her headway, when the enemy brought their entire battery for the last time to bear upon her; but this last volley killed one man, mortally wounded Commander Read, and wounded Captain Jenkins and three of the men. The stopping of the *Monongahela*, to enable the convoy to come under protection, gave this advantage to the rebels; but, at the same time, it enabled the *Monongahela* to give such heavy blows in return, that the enemy, ensconced behind the levee, withdrew precipitately without firing another shot.

Admiral Farragut left the command below Port Hudson to Captain Jenkins, on board the *Richmond*, as soon as the news of the fall of Vicksburg was received; and, after encountering the enemy at various points, in his frail flag-ship the *Tennessee*, on his way down the river, reached New Orleans about the time Port Hudson surrendered to the Union forces.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

REBEL STEAMER ORETO, OR FLORIDA, RUNS INTO MOBILE BAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1862.

THE blockade of the entrance to Mobile Bay, on September 4, 1862, when the rebel steamer Oreto appeared off that port, carrying an English ensign and pendant, and ran boldly in, was composed of the steam-sloop Oneida (Commander Preble), the steam-gunboats Cayuga and Winona, and a sailing bomb-vessel. The force was a very small one for night police; but the country was astounded on learning that a vessel of the size and armament of the Oreto had, in broad daylight, on a pleasant autumn afternoon, run boldly up to the main entrance, and passed unscathed into the bay, where she would be protected by rebel forts. The indignation of the Navy was not less than that of the people of the country, who, not being experts in naval affairs, might be considered excusable for allowing feeling to control in some degree sound judgment.

It appears that, notwithstanding the small force that Admiral Farragut could spare, at that time, for the blockade of that point with a due regard to the many other demands upon his small fleet, the senior officer, Commander Preble, had sent, or permitted the Cayuga to go, out of signal distance, to shoot cattle on an adjacent island for the use of those on board the vessels. This was a fatal error, a tempting of Providence, to send the next vessel, in point of efficiency, to that of the senior officer's, away, when it was known to all the world that the Oreto was hovering about the Bahamas, watching for an opportunity to enter a rebel port. Admiral Farragut reported the facts briefly to the Department, and the Secretary of the Navy,

correctly in the opinion of the great majority of the officers of the Navy, promptly recommended to the President the summary dismissal of Commander Preble from the Navy. The punishment was severe; but the facts showed conclusively either a great want of judgment or capacity on the part of the commander. Appeals of public men, and the sympathies of friends for those who were necessarily made innocent sufferers, prevailed to the extent of obtaining the consent of the Department to lay the facts of the case before a board of officers of the Navy, of high rank, who were at the request of Commander Preble to determine certain points submitted by him. This board, in effect, sustained the action of the Department, by deciding adversely to the claim that he had done his whole duty in his efforts to prevent the Oreto from passing the blockade line. This officer was, however, subsequently restored to the Navy list, through the intervention of friends in Congress.

THE ESCAPE OF THE ORETO, OR FLORIDA, FROM MOBILE BAY ON THE 15TH  
OF JANUARY, 1863.

The first excitement, chagrin, and disgust, caused by the passing of the Oreto into Mobile Bay, soon gave place to the consoling reflection that she was there safe from mischief, and that no efforts would be spared to detain her imprisoned, and, under no circumstances, would these efforts be for a moment relaxed.

Commander Preble was relieved of the command of the division by Commodore H. H. Bell, in the Brooklyn, and very soon thereafter Captain Jenkins, who had been serving in James River, was sent to relieve Commander Preble in the command of the Oneida. During the fall, and up to a few days before the escape of the Oreto, on the 15th of January, 1863, the blockade had been in command of Commodore Bell and Captain Jenkins, the one relieving the other alternately, for repairs of their respective vessels, and for obtaining supplies, etc., from Pensacola, until the untoward events on the 1st of January at Galveston made it necessary to dispatch Commodore Bell in the Brooklyn to that place to restore the blockade, which had been temporarily raised by an error of judgment

of the senior officer, after the Westfield had been blown up, and the Harriet Lane captured by the rebels.

The numerous reports from Mobile in regard to the proposed movements of the rebel pirate kept the blockaders on the *qui vive*. Sleepless nights were passed by commanding officers, crews kept at their guns, picket-boats kept stationed in the entrances, improvised signals adopted and promulgated for giving the speediest information of the approach of the enemy; a written programme prepared and communicated as an order to the different vessels for attacking, boarding and chasing the Oreto, in case she should make her appearance, day or night; and every precaution prescribed to guard against friend encountering friend, in case of collision at night: in short, the capture of the Oreto was the all-absorbing thought and topic in the division stationed off Mobile Bay at that time. The Brooklyn having been sent away, it became necessary that the Susquehanna, Commodore Hitchcock, lying at Pensacola in a half-crippled state, should relieve the Oneida, Captain Jenkins, for a few days, to enable that vessel to proceed to Pensacola to obtain supplies of coal and provisions.

The Oneida, after an absence of a few days in the early part of January, 1863, returned to the blockade off Mobile, where Captain Hazard had arrived with orders from the admiral to relieve Captain Jenkins in command of the Oneida, and that the latter should at once proceed to New Orleans, and report on board the Hartford, as captain of the fleet and chief of staff. Captain Hazard took command of the Oneida on the afternoon of the 13th of January. A moderate gale commenced from the eastward during the night of the 13th, gradually increasing, and continued with the wind hauling round by the south to the westward, with rain and thick weather during the day and night of the 14th. On the afternoon of the 14th, when the weather cleared up a little, the masts of a strange vessel were seen behind Fort Morgan. An inspection of the vessel left no doubt in the minds of those who had seen the Oreto, or had read a description of her, that the long-looked-for rebel pirate had at length made her appearance, intending to avail herself of the propitious state of the weather to attempt an escape during the night. The Susquehanna, Commodore

Hitchcock, made signal that the enemy appeared to be ready to run out, and directed the Oneida and Cuyler to chase in case of an alarm during the night. The Pembina, lying at anchor near the bar of the main entrance to the bay, was signalled to come within hail of the Susquehanna. Commodore Hitchcock directed the commander of the Pembina to go close to the Cuyler and Oneida, and direct the commanders of those vessels to chase to the south and eastward, in case any vessel should be reported running out during the night, and then to resume her station.

It was evident to all present on board of the Susquehanna, that the vessel lying under Fort Morgan was the Oreto, the object of incessant watching night and day by the vessels off Mobile since she entered on the preceding 4th of September, and it was equally certain that her intention was to avail herself of the then favorable weather for running out that night. Commodore Hitchcock not only made the necessary signals, but sent verbal orders to the Oneida and Cuyler, the only two vessels having sufficient speed to compete with the rebel vessel. Everybody on board the Susquehanna was on the lookout for signals, and at about 3 A. M. the Pembina made the signal, "A strange sail running out of this pass!" and slipped her cable and stood to sea with her red light, the prescribed signal, exhibited. The Oreto, coming out in the darkness, ran very close to the Pembina; but, discovering it, changed her course to port, and, in a few minutes, found herself very near the Cuyler, which also signalled, "A strange sail running out of this pass!" and slipped the cable and stood to the southward and eastward, as previously ordered by Commodore Hitchcock. As soon as the Pembina made her signal, the Susquehanna made general signal to chase. The sea was so heavy that the guns of the Pembina and Cuyler could not be safely cast loose, so that there was no firing, although the Oreto ran very close to them both. The Pembina and Cuyler, lying head to the wind, which was blowing fresh from the westward, lost time in turning to the southward and eastward, which gave the Oreto a good start. At daylight, Commodore Hitchcock was much chagrined at finding that, notwithstanding the precise orders, by signal and verbally, the previous afternoon, and that the general sig-

nal to chase had been made when the Oreto was first discovered coming out by the Pembina, the Oneida, the vessel upon which most reliance had been placed to overtake and capture the Oreto whenever she should make her appearance, had not left her anchorage.

The anticipated results of the preparations that had been made by Captain Jenkins, the divisional commander, prior to the arrival of Commodore Hitchcock in the *Susquehanna*, the ceaseless vigilance for months and weeks of officers and men, hoping to encounter and capture the audacious rebel, seemed to be entirely lost from the fact that the vessel, upon which almost entire reliance had been placed, had failed to leave her anchorage at the auspicious moment. The Cuyler, though comparatively fast, was not equal in speed to the Oneida, and being a frail iron vessel with an armament inferior to that of the Oreto, and the Pembina being small and of moderate speed, from her size and slowness, little hope remained of overtaking and capturing the fleeing pirate. The chasing vessels pressed with sail and steam before the fresh gale and heavy sea, their propellers racing to such a degree as to endanger momentarily the entire machinery of the vessels. At first, the Cuyler seemed to gain upon the Oreto, while the Pembina could not hold her own. The chase was a most exciting one. Late in the evening of the 15th, the Pembina, in compliance with the general orders in the blockade, and finding the Oreto gaining upon her, turned her head toward her station off Mobile. The Cuyler, at the time the Pembina turned her head from the chase, was estimated to be about eight miles astern, having carried away her fore-yard under a press of sail, and apparently dropping astern. During the night, the Cuyler, having lost sight of the Oreto, proceeded to Key West and Havana; but the wily pirate turned aside, and the next day commenced depredating upon unarmed merchant-vessels.

Commodore Hitchcock dispatched the Oneida to report the escape of the Oreto to the commanders of the squadron at Key West and in the West Indies. The Cuyler and Oneida were detained for some time, thus reducing materially Admiral Farragut's already weakened squadron, and interfering greatly with his predetermined intentions in regard to operations in the Mis-

issippi above Port Hudson. The escape of the Oreto from Mobile was a sad disappointment to those who had been watching and waiting so long for her to make her appearance, and a great misfortune to the country, thus adding another unscrupulous pirate to the list of depredators upon our ocean commerce. None of those present, it is believed, have ever ceased to think that, if the orders to chase had been promptly and strictly carried out by the Oneida, the Oreto would have escaped. The failure to obey orders, and to carry out a well-considered plan, showed either deficiency of judgment and capacity, or a wilful disregard of duty.







Painted by W. J. Whitley, U. S. N.

"NIPSIC."

Painted by W. J. Whitley, U. S. N.





## CHAPTER XXVIII

### PASSAGE OF THE VICKSBURG BATTERIES BY THE QUEEN OF THE WEST, AND HER SUBSEQUENT OPERATIONS.—THE INDIANOLA.

AFTER the capture of New Orleans, and the opening of the river from above as far down as Vicksburg, it was equally important for both parties to control the long reach of the Mississippi lying between. The rebels, therefore, strengthened, as rapidly as possible, both Port Hudson and Vicksburg, so as to prevent the passage of our ships, while, on our part, in the opening of 1863, these two places were menaced by powerful armies, while both Farragut and Porter were anxious to get a part of their naval force past the formidable batteries, in order that they might patrol the stream between, and blockade the mouth of the Red River, from which the rebels were drawing large supplies. This induced Admiral Farragut to attempt the passage of the batteries at Port Hudson, in order to bring up his fleet from below.

Previous to this, however, Porter had made a movement to get the control of the river below Vicksburg by sending some of his own vessels past the batteries there. He conceived the idea of getting one of the swift, strong boats of his ram-fleet below, under the command of the enterprising and dashing Ellet—believing that if such a steamer, under such a man, could be placed safely on the stream below Vicksburg, the rebels might be severely crippled in their communications and supplies. Colonel Ellet seems to have been a man whose daring spirit gave Admiral Porter especial pleasure. He mentioned him in this manner to the Secretary: "I cannot speak too highly of this gallant and daring officer. The only trouble

I have is to hold him in, and keep him out of danger. He will undertake any thing I wish him to without asking questions; and those are the men I like to command." Those men who undertake any thing, asking no questions, are certainly much more convenient than those who require a reason; but then it is often found that the man who asks for and receives a satisfactory reason for a command is the most reliable of all in the execution of a plan. Machines make less efficient soldiers and sailors than intelligent, thinking men; and upon this fact depended the superior officers of our armies during the rebellion. The following is Porter's order to Ellet:

YAZOO RIVER, *February 1, 1863.*

SIR: You will proceed with the *Queen of the West* to Vicksburg, and destroy the steamer *Vicksburg*, lying off that place; after which, you will proceed down the river as far as our batteries, below the canal, and report to me. In going down you will go along under low speed, having steerage-way enough, and keeping close to the right-hand shore going down. Before you start, it would be better to have a large bed of coal in, so that you will not have to put in fresh coal. The smoke might betray you. After you have destroyed the steamer, go downstream, and when clear of the city, show three vertical lights, that our batteries may not fire on you. If you get disabled, drift down until abreast of our batteries, and the small army-steamer will go to your assistance. Have every light in your ship put out before you leave for Vicksburg, except the three lights to be shown to our batteries, which must be kept covered up. See that no lights show from the stern, as you pass the town, enabling them to rake you; and adopt every means of concealment. The best place to strike the steamer is twenty feet forward of her wheel. After disabling her there, so that she will sink, fire through her boilers and in among her machinery as she goes down. . . . Respectfully, etc.,

DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

Colonel CHARLES R. ELLET, *Ram Queen of the West.*

Colonel Ellet gave a spirited account of the passage of the forts:

U. S. STEAM-RAM *QUEEN OF THE WEST*, BELOW VICKSBURG, *Feb. 2, 1863.*

ADMIRAL: In compliance with your instructions, I started on the *Queen of the West*, at half-past 4 o'clock this morning, to pass the batteries at Vicksburg, and sink the rebel steamer lying before that city.

I discovered immediately on starting that the change of the wheel from its former position to the narrow space behind the Queen's bulwark did not permit the boat to be handled with sufficient accuracy. An hour or more was spent in rearranging the apparatus, and when we finally rounded the point the sun had risen, and any advantage which would have resulted from the darkness was lost to us.

The rebels opened a heavy fire upon us as we neared the city, but we were only struck three times before reaching the steamer. She was lying in nearly the same position that the Arkansas occupied when General Ellet ran the Queen into her on a former occasion. The same causes which prevented the destruction of the Arkansas then, saved the City of Vicksburg this morning. Her position was such that if we had run obliquely into her as we came down, the bow of the Queen would inevitably have glanced. We were compelled to partially round-to in order to strike. The consequence was, that at the very moment of collision, the current, very strong and rapid at this point, caught the stern of my boat, and, acting on her bow as a pivot, swung her round so rapidly that nearly all her momentum was lost. I had anticipated this result, and therefore caused the starboard bow-gun to be shotted with three of the incendiary projectiles recommended in your orders. As we swung round, Sergeant J. H. Campbell, detailed for the purpose, fired this gun. A 64-pound shell crashed through the barricade just before he reached the spot, but he did not hesitate. The discharge took place at exactly the right moment, and set the rebel steamer in flames, which they subsequently succeeded in extinguishing.

At this moment one of the enemy's shells set the cotton near the starboard wheel on fire, while the discharge of our own gun ignited that portion which was on the bow. The flames spread rapidly, and the dense smoke, rolling into the engine-room, suffocated the engineers. I saw that, if I attempted to run into the City of Vicksburg again, my boat would certainly be burnt. I ordered her to be headed downstream, and turned every man to extinguishing the flames. After much exertion we finally put the fire out by cutting the burning bales loose. The enemy of course were not idle. We were struck twelve times, but though the cabin was knocked to pieces, no material injury to the boat, or to any of those on her, was inflicted.

About two regiments of rebel sharpshooters, in rifle-pits, kept up a continual fire, but did no damage. The Queen was struck twice in the hull, but above the water-line. One of our guns was dismounted and ruined. . . . I remain, very respectfully,

CHARLES RIVERS ELLET, *Colonel, commanding Ram-fleet.*

D. D. PORTER, *Acting Rear-Admiral, com'ding Mississippi Squadron.*

The special object which Admiral Porter had in view is set forth in these instructions :

U. S. MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, *February 8, 1863.*

COLONEL : When you have taken in your coal you will proceed, at night, after dark, with the *De Soto* and the coal-barge down the river, showing no lights. When you get near Red River, wait until daylight, above the mouth ; from there you will be able to see the smoke of any steamer, over the trees, as she comes down Red River. When you capture them, do not burn them until you have broken all the machinery ; then let go the anchors, and let them burn under your own eyes at their anchors. There will be no danger, then, of any part of them floating down to the enemy.

There is one vessel, the *Webb*, that you must look out for. If you get the first crack at her you will sink her, and if she gets the first crack at you she will sink you. My advice is to put a few cotton-bales over your bow about fifteen feet abaft the stern, and if she strikes you there, there will be no harm done. It is likely that an attempt will be made to board you ; if there is, do not open any doors or ports to board in return, but act on the defensive, giving the enemy steam and shell. Do not forget to wet your cotton before going into action. Do not lose sight of the *De Soto*, unless in chase, and under circumstances where it will be perfectly safe. When your coal is all out of the barge, you can take the *De Soto* alongside. You can help each other along. Destroy her at once when there is the least chance of her falling into the hands of the enemy. She is now, though, a Government vessel, and should be brought back if possible. Destroy all small boats you meet with on the river ; also wharf-boats and barges. If you have a chance, and have plenty of coal, take a look at Port Hudson, and give them a few rifle-shots, but do not pass by. Communicate with the squadron below by signal, if possible. The great object is to destroy all you can of the enemy's stores and provisions, and get your vessel back safe. Pass all batteries at night. If the canal is opened, I will keep you supplied with coal. Keep your pilot-house well supplied with hand-grenades, etc., in case the enemy should get on your upper decks. Do not show your colors along the river, unless necessary in action.

Very respectfully,                      DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

*Colonel CHARLES R. ELLET, commanding Mississippi Ram-fleet.*

Colonel Ellet was, for a time, very successful in his new enterprise. He left the landing below the cut-off on the 2d of

February, and took the people below entirely by surprise, for they had not thought it possible for such a steamer to pass the Vicksburg batteries. At Warrenton he found two batteries of four guns each, four of which were 24-pounder rifles. These opened upon him as he passed, and the ram was twice struck without receiving any material injury, and she passed defiantly on her way. About fifteen miles below the mouth of Red River he met a side-wheel steamer coming up. As the rebels had not heard of such a craft in those waters, their boat approached without suspicion until it was too late to escape, and then the rebel officers ran their steamer ashore, and as many as could of those on board leaped into the water and escaped. Among these were several officers of the rebel army. This steamer had been down to Port Hudson with supplies, and was returning for another cargo.

By the time he had placed a guard upon this boat, another steamer was seen coming down Red River, and she was also captured. She had on board over one hundred thousand pounds of pork, five hundred hogs, and a large quantity of salt, for the rebel army at Port Hudson. Soon after still another steamer was captured in Red River, with two hundred barrels of molasses, two hogsheads of sugar, and thirty thousand pounds of flour. These operations show what large quantities of food and various supplies the rebels were procuring from the Mississippi and its tributaries, between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and the reason why both Farragut and Porter made such efforts to control this part of the great river.

The *Indianola*, a new iron-clad, carrying two 11-inch guns forward, had been sent from Cincinnati to join Admiral Porter; and to strengthen the force below Vicksburg he determined to send her past the batteries, and on the 12th of February he gave to her commander the following order:

U. S. MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, *February 12, 1863.*

SIR: You will take two coal-barges alongside, that have been somewhat lightened of coal, and stand by to run past the batteries at Vicksburg, and join the vessels below. The object in sending you is to protect the ram *Queen of the West* and the *De Soto* against the *Webb*, the enemy's ram; she will not attack you both. I do not wish you to go below Red River, but to remain there while Colonel Ellet reconnoitres



Port Hudson, and prevent his being taken by vessels from Red River. Keep your guns loaded with solid shot, or, if you are attacked by vessels protected with cotton-bales, fire shrapnel, which are good incendiary shell. If you can capture a good steamer, I want you to keep her. Go to Jeff. Davis's plantation, and his brother Joe's, and load up said steamer with all the cotton you can find, and the best single male negroes. If you cannot get cotton enough to protect the steamer you capture, obtain it at Acklen's Landing, and when you have filled the prize up with as much as she will carry and make good speed, send her up to run the batteries and join me here. To do this, daub over her white paint with mud, so that she cannot be seen in the dark. Dispose the cotton-bags so that every thing is well protected, and no light can possibly show in any part of the boat. You must select dark and rainy nights for running the blockade, and don't show yourself below Warrenton as you come up. After you pass the batteries at Vicksburg show two red lights on your bow, that our people at the canal may know you. If you receive any damage from the batteries send me a short report from the other side, and go on with care until you are the other side (some distance) of Warrenton; lay by there until the moon is up and proceed to Red River. When the Queen of the West returns, Colonel Ellet and yourself will go up Red River (provided you can get good pilots) and destroy all you meet with in the shape of enemy's stores. This part must be left to your discretion; Ellet and yourself will consult together what is best to be done; and whatever you undertake, try and have no failure. When you have not means of certain success, undertake nothing; a failure is equal to a defeat. Never leave your coal-barge unprotected by the De Soto, and never leave her between you and the enemy. Don't forget that I had your vessel strengthened to perform the part of a ram—don't hesitate to run any thing down. When you have emptied the coal-barges, either destroy them, so that the enemy cannot possibly use them, or fill them with cotton and bring them back. Make your calculations to get back here with plenty of coal on board. Tell Colonel Ellet when he gets to Port Hudson to send a communication in a barrel (barrel to be marked "Essex"), and tell the commander, in said communication, that I direct him to pass Port Hudson in a dark night and join the vessels above. Have your casemates and sides well covered with tallow and slush before you start.

Very respectfully, DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*  
*Lieutenant-Commander GEORGE BROWN,*  
*commanding Indianola, Mississippi Squadron.*

In accordance with these instructions, the *Indianola* ran the gantlet of the batteries without being struck by a single shot. The rebels, however, were by no means inactive, and before the *Indianola* had reached Natchez, Colonel Ellet's steamer, the *Queen of the West*, was captured; and not being materially injured, she was at once converted into a powerful instrument in the hands of the enemy.

The *Queen of the West* left the landing below Vicksburg on the 10th of February, and proceeded down the river, pausing as she went, to destroy all skiffs and flat-boats found on either shore. She ascended Red River on the 12th as far as the mouth of the Atchafalaya, and then went down that stream. He soon met a train of army-wagons which were within the range of his guns. These, with seventy barrels of beef, were captured and destroyed. Returning by night, some overseers and other civilians collected and fired into the *Queen* from behind the levee, and the first master, J. D. Thompson, was shot through the knee. For this act of guerilla warfare they were made to pay very dearly, for Colonel Ellet anchored at the mouth of the Atchafalaya, and in the morning he went out and burned all the buildings on three plantations where the foolish outrage was committed.

On the 14th the *Queen* captured a small steamer, the *Era*, having on board forty-five hundred bushels of corn. The *Queen* was soon after captured; and as Colonel Ellet was censured (not officially) for the loss of his vessel, it is perhaps just to publish his own account of the matter:

Hearing of three very large boats lying with steam down at Gordon's Landing, thirty miles above, I decided on making an effort to capture them, intending to return if I should find the battery at that point too strong, and ascend the Washita. I left the *Era* and coal-barge in charge of a guard. We reached the bend just below Gordon's Landing before dark. The dense smoke of several boats, rapidly firing up, could be seen over the tops of the trees as we approached. I ordered the pilot to proceed very slowly, and merely show the bow of the *Queen* around the point. From the sharp bend which the river makes at this place, there was no apparent difficulty in withdrawing out of range of the enemy's guns whenever it might be desired. The rebels opened upon us with four 32-pounders the moment we came in sight. Their

guns were in a fine position, and at the third shot I ordered Mr. Garocy, the pilot, to back the Queen out. Instead of doing so, he ran her aground on the right-hand shore. The position at once became a very hot one. Sixty yards below we would have been in no danger; as it was, the enemy's shot struck us nearly every time. The chief-engineer had hardly reported to me that the escape-pipe had been shot away, when an explosion below, and a rush of steam around the boat, told me that the steam-pipe had been shot in two. Nothing further, of course, could be done. I gave orders to lower the yawl at the stern of the Queen to carry off Captain Thompson, who lay wounded in my state-room. Some person had already taken the yawl, however, and it was gone. The other yawl was on the De Soto, a short distance below. Fortunately, the cotton-bales, with which the Queen was protected, afforded an avenue of escape, and the majority of the men and officers succeeded in reaching the De Soto. I ordered this boat to be brought up as far as it was practicable, without being struck, and sent her yawl to the Queen. Lieutenant Tuthill and Third-Master Duncan bravely volunteered for this purpose. I remained with the De Soto over an hour, picking up men on cotton-bales. Lieutenant Tuthill barely succeeded in escaping from the Queen, the rebels boarding her in skiffs as he escaped. Mr. Duncan stayed too long, and was captured. The Queen could easily have been burned, but this could not be done while Captain Thompson was on board, and it was impossible to remove him; all the passages had been blocked up with cotton. The interior of the boat was intensely dark, full of steam, and strewn with shattered furniture. The display of a light enabled the batteries to strike her with unerring certainty. To have brought the De Soto alongside would have insured her destruction, as the light from the latter's furnaces rendered her a conspicuous mark.

A dense fog sprang up as we started down in the De Soto, and she lost her rudder by running into the bank. Drifting down fifteen miles, I took possession of the Era, and scuttled and burnt the De Soto and barge, knowing that the rebels would lose no time in pursuing. I pushed on down through the fog, throwing off the corn to lighten her. We reached the Mississippi at dawn, opposite Ellis's Cliffs. Mr. Garocy ran the Era, a boat drawing less than ten feet of water, hard aground, actually permitting her wheels to make several evolutions after she had struck. It was with the utmost difficulty that she could be gotten off. The disloyal sentiments openly expressed by Mr. Garocy a few hours previous to this occurrence rendered it necessary for me to place him under arrest, and forced upon me the unwilling conviction that the loss

of the Queen was due to the deliberate treachery of the pilot. It is to be regretted that the unfortunate illness of Mr. Scott Long, who piloted the Queen past Vicksburg, rendered it necessary for me to intrust the Queen to the management of Mr. Garocy.

Almost immediately following this disaster came the capture of the Indianola, a powerful, well-armed iron-clad, by some wooden rebel boats, one of which was the Queen of the West. The loss of this steamer, from which much had been justly expected, occasioned great surprise and indignation in the country. Admiral Porter thus expressed his chagrin to the Secretary of the Navy: "This has, in my opinion, been the most humiliating affair that has occurred during the rebellion; and after taking so much trouble to make matters sure, it almost disheartens me. . . . I certainly had a right to expect that two vessels, carrying twelve guns, that had passed all the batteries at Vicksburg, Warrenton, Carthage, and other places on the river, could manage between them to take one old steamer, or else have the wisdom and patriotism to destroy their vessels, even if they had to go with them."

To blow one's self and crew into eternity, merely to prevent a vessel falling into the hands of an enemy, would make a very large demand upon the patriotism of most men.

The following extract from Lieutenant Brown's letter gives a portion of his account of the voyage and capture of the Indianola:

I reached the mouth of the Red River on the 17th of February, from which time until the 21st of the same month I maintained a strict blockade at that point. I could procure no Red River pilots, and therefore did not enter that river. The Era No. 5 being unarmed, and having several prisoners on board, Colonel Ellet decided to go up the river and communicate with the squadron, and sailed at noon on the 18th of the same month for that purpose.

On learning that the Queen of the West had been repaired by the rebels and was nearly ready for service, also that the William H. Webb and four cotton-clad boats with boarding-parties on board were fitting out to attack the Indianola, I left the Red River for the purpose of getting cotton to fill up the space between the casemate and wheel-houses, so as to be better able to repel the boarding-parties.

By the afternoon of the 23d of the same month I had procured as much cotton as I required, and concluded to keep on up the river, thinking that I would certainly meet another boat the morning following, but I was disappointed. I then concluded to communicate with the squadron as soon as possible, thinking that Colonel Ellet had not reached the squadron, or that Admiral Porter would expect me to return when I found that no other boat was sent below.

I kept the bunkers of the *Indianola* filled with coal, and would have sunk what remained in the barges; but knowing that if another boat was sent below Vicksburg, I would be expected to supply her with coal, I concluded to hold on to the barges as long as possible. In consequence of having the barges alongside, we could make but slow progress against the current; the result of which was, that I did not reach Grand Gulf until the morning of the 24th of the same month, at which point, and at others above, we were fired on by parties on shore. As I knew that it would be as much as I could do to get by the Warrenton batteries before daylight the next morning, I returned the fire of but one party.

At about half-past 9 P. M. on the 24th of the same month, the night being very dark, four boats were discovered in chase of us. I immediately cleared for action, and as soon as all preparations were completed I turned and stood down the river to meet them. At this time the leading vessel was about three miles below, the others following in close order. As we neared them I made them out to be the rams *Queen of the West* and *William H. Webb*, and two other steamers, cotton-clad and filled with men.

The *Queen of the West* was the first to strike us, which she did after passing through the coal-barge lashed to our port side, doing us no serious damage. Next came the *Webb*. I stood for her at full speed; both vessels came together bows on, with a tremendous crash, which knocked nearly every one down on board of both vessels, doing no damage to us, while the *Webb's* bow was cut in at least eight feet, extending from about two feet above the water-line to the keelson.

At this time the engagement became general and at very close quarters. I devoted but little attention to the cotton-clad steamers, although they kept up a heavy fire with field-pieces and small-arms, as I knew that every thing depended on my disabling the rams. The third blow crushed the starboard barge, leaving parts hanging by the lashings, which were speedily cut. The crew of the *Indianola* not numbering enough men to man both batteries, I kept the forward guns manned all the time, and fired them whenever I could get a shot at the rams.

The night being very dark, our aim was very uncertain, and our fire proved less effective than I thought it at the time. The peep-holes in the pilot-house were so small that it would have been a difficult matter to have worked the vessel from that place in daylight, so that during the whole engagement, the pilots were unable to aid me by their knowledge of the river, as they were unable to see any thing. Consequently, they could do no more than obey such orders as they received from me in regard to working the engines and the helm. No misunderstanding occurred in the performance of that duty, and I was enabled to receive the first five blows from the rams forward of the wheels, and at such angles that they did no more damage than to start the plating where they struck.

The sixth blow we received was from the Webb, which crushed in the starboard wheel, disabled the starboard rudder, and started a number of leaks abaft the shaft. Being unable to work the starboard engine placed us in an almost powerless condition; but I continued the fight until after we received the seventh blow, which was given us by the Webb. She struck us fair in the stern, and started the timbers and starboard rudder-box so that the water poured in in large volumes. At this time I knew that the *Indianola* could be of no more service to us, and my desire was to render her useless to the enemy, which I did by keeping her in deep water until there was two and a half feet of water over the floor, and the leaks were increasing rapidly as she settled, so as to bring the opening made by the Webb under water.

Knowing that if either of the rams struck us again in the stern, which they then had excellent opportunities of doing, on account of our disabled condition, we would sink so suddenly that few if any lives would be saved, I succeeded in running her bows on shore by starting the screw-engines. As further resistance could only result in a great loss of life on our part, without a corresponding result on the part of the enemy, I surrendered the *Indianola*, a partially sunken vessel, fast filling with water, to a force of four vessels, mounting ten guns, and manned by over one thousand men.

The engagement lasted one hour and twenty-seven minutes. I lost but one killed, one wounded, and seven missing; while the enemy lost two officers, and thirty-three men killed, and many wounded. Before the enemy could make any preparations for endeavoring to save the *Indianola*, her stern was under water. Both rams were so very much crippled, that I doubt whether they would have tried to ram again had not their last blow proved so fatal to us. Both signal-books were thrown in the river by me a few minutes before the surrender.

In conclusion, I would state that the 9-inch guns of the *Indianola* were thrown overboard, and the 11-inch guns damaged by being loaded with heavy charges and solid shot, placed muzzle to muzzle, and fired by a slow-match, so that they were rendered useless.

Although it might be difficult to show that the *Indianola* was not courageously defended when once in action, *under such circumstances*, it would not be easy to prove that there was any necessity for placing her in such a position. Her commander knew well that the *Webb*, the captured *Queen of the West*, and other steamers, were in Red River, preparing to attack him; and common prudence demanded that he should put his vessel in a place of safety, or at least keep her in good fighting trim. He first waited until the rebels had time to get the *Queen* and the cotton-clad boats ready, and then started up the river at a rate so slow as enabled his enemy to track him leisurely and surely; and thus he allowed himself to be caught on a dark night by four steamers, while he was encumbered with a coal-barge on either side. Of course he could neither manœuvre the *Indianola*, nor give her any adequate speed. With her coal-barges she must have been nearly unmanageable, except when going straight ahead, and the more active steamers, attacking with no encumbrance, seem to have struck her where their commanders chose. The *Queen* first struck her, doing no damage, and then came the *Webb*, and both vessels rushed at each other bows on. As the two 11-inch guns of the *Indianola* were mounted in her forward casemate, so as to train right ahead, it is difficult to see how the *Webb* could have survived this stroke a moment had these guns been fired at the instant of collision. The strength of the *Indianola* was shown by the fact that she was not injured by the stroke, while the *Webb* was shattered; and had two 11-inch shells traversed her at that moment, it would have finished the battle. The *Queen* and the cotton-clad boats could have been quickly disposed of after that.

It appears that the *Indianola* was only half manned, and very little use was made of her after-battery, so that when the rams approached her on the quarter or stern there was nothing to oppose them; and how it was possible that the rebel rams should have struck the iron-clad five times forward of her

wheel, without being destroyed by her 11-inch guns, does not appear. Much allowance must be made for the unmanageable condition of the *Indianola*, the darkness of the night, and the attack of four vessels at once. Still, with no evidence of lack of courage, the battle seems to have been conducted in a confused and helpless way; and if there was seamanship or skill, it does not appear in the accounts which have been given.

This capture placed the Mississippi, between Vicksburg and Port Hudson, and also the Red River, once more under the control of the rebels, and hence the greater anxiety of Admiral Farragut to get his fleet above.



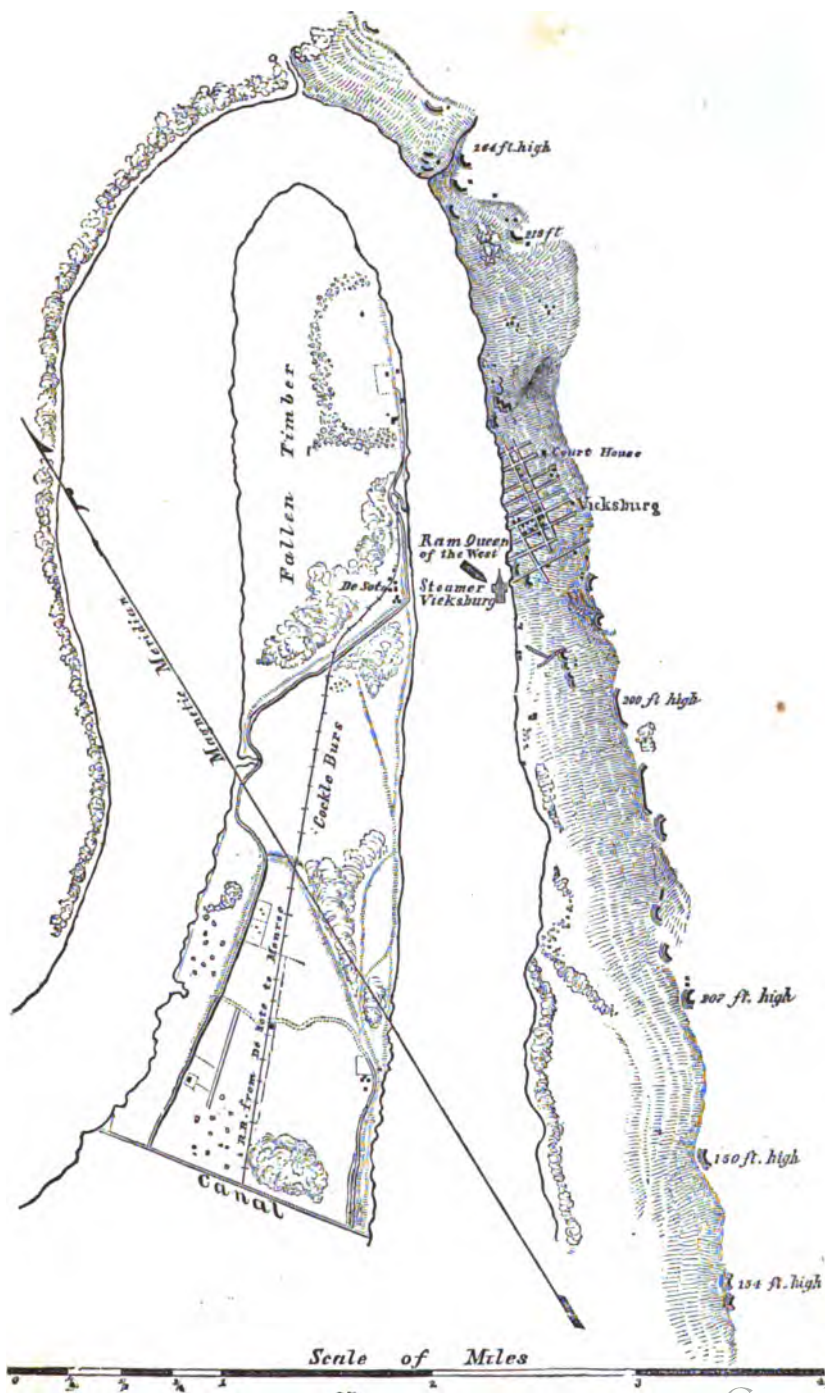
## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A SUCCESSFUL CANAL-PASSAGE OF THE VICKSBURG BATTERIES BY ADMIRAL PORTER'S FLEET.

AMONG the attempts to turn the course of Western rivers, or to form new navigable channels, two at least were successful: one by which the transports were taken round Island No. 10; and another, called Selfridge's cut-off, between the Arkansas and White Rivers. The mouths of these two streams are so far apart that it was difficult to blockade both without a large force.

A few miles below the mouth of the White River the Mississippi and the Arkansas approach very near to each other; and Lieutenant Selfridge proposed to cut this narrow neck between, and then the Arkansas would be brought so near to the White River that both could be easily blockaded; and, besides, on the neck of land between the Arkansas and the Mississippi was a very annoying guerilla station, the formation of the land being such that the rebels could follow a vessel around the whole length of the shore of the peninsula. Lieutenant Selfridge cut his canal across the neck, made it practicable for his gunboats, and at the same time converted the guerilla station into an island, that could no longer be occupied.

Early in April all projects for getting to the rear of Vicksburg with the army had failed. The canal across the neck, the Lake Providence canal, the Yazoo Pass, and Steele's Bayou, all had been tried and abandoned. Vicksburg was still as defiant as ever—impregnable in front, and as yet unapproachable in rear. The gunboats could riddle the city with shells; but many of the inhabitants had dug in the banks subterranean dwellings, which, however uncomfortable, were, for the most



part, a good protection from shot and shell. The garrison was subjected to some daily loss; but it was evident that so long as supplies could be obtained, the city would hold out against any such attempts as had already been made.

A consultation was held, and a new plan devised. It was decided to attempt to pass the batteries with the post and army transports, and then marching the army below, cross the Mississippi, and reach the rear of Vicksburg by a rapid movement from below. On the 7th of April Admiral Porter wrote: "I am preparing to pass the batteries of Vicksburg with most of the fleet;" and on the 10th the following instructions were issued to each commander:

U. S. MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, FLAG-SHIP *BLACK HAWK*, *April 10, 1863.*

SIR: You will prepare your vessels for passing the batteries at Vicksburg, taking every precaution possible to protect the hull and machinery against any accidental shot.

When the vessels do move, it will be at night, and in the following order: Benton, Lafayette, Price, Louisville, Mound City, Pittsburg, Carondelet, other vessels that may arrive hereafter, and army transports, passing as fast as they can. Every vessel will take in tow a coal-barge, to be carried on the starboard side. No lights will be shown on any part of the ship. All ports will be covered up until such time as the vessels open fire, which they will do when their broadsides bear upon the town, or when it can be safely done without interfering with the pilot or endangering the other vessels. Before starting, the hour of departure will be given, and every vessel will have her fires well ignited, so that they will show as little smoke as possible.

On approaching the batteries every vessel will exhaust in the wheel, so as to make but little noise.

If any vessel should receive such damage as to cause her to be in a sinking condition, the best plan will be to land her on the island below the canal. The vessels must not crowd each other, nor fire their bow-guns when abreast of the town or batteries. Fifty yards is the closest they should be to each other. After rounding the point below, and being clear of the shoal water, hug the shore enough (or the side opposite Vicksburg) to get into the shade of the trees, and hide the hulls of the vessels. The crew must work the guns without light on the deck, and all the guns must be set for about nine hundred yards, which will reach light field-pieces and infantry. Fire shell, and sometimes grape. Don't fire after passing the town and main batteries—the

lower batteries are not worth noticing. When arrived below Warrenton, the flag-ship Benton will burn a Coston signal, when each vessel will hoist a red light, that I may know who is missing.

The sterns of the vessels must be protected securely against raking shot. The coal-barges must be so arranged that they can be easily cut adrift. No vessel must run directly astern of the other, so that in case of the headmost vessel stopping, the sternmost one will not run into her. In case any vessel should ground under the enemy's batteries at Vicksburg, with no prospect of getting off, she must be set fire to thoroughly, and completely destroyed. Avoid running on the sunken levees opposite Vicksburg.

Very respectfully,

DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

*Commanders of Benton, Lafayette, Price, Louisville, Mound City, Pittsburg, Carondelet, and Tuscumbia.*

On the evening of the 16th of April the fleet was prepared, and started down the river in the following order, and fifty yards apart: the Benton, Lieutenant Green; Lafayette, Captain Walke, with the General Price lashed on her starboard side; Louisville, Lieutenant Owen; Mound City, Lieutenant Wilson; Pittsburg, Lieutenant Hart; Carondelet, Lieutenant Murphy; Tuscumbia, Lieutenant Shirk; the tug Ivy, and some army transports. In addition, most of the steamers took coal-barges in tow, each containing ten thousand bushels of coal. Considering the formidable character of the batteries, very little loss was sustained in this movement. The iron plating of the gunboats, though frequently penetrated, was, nevertheless, a great protection. One transport was sunk, one disabled, and the gunboats were often struck, and yet no lives were lost.

The vessels were protected by a variety of devices, by which, doubtless, many lives were saved. Cotton-bales and bales of wet hay were piled wherever they could be of any service, and large logs were triced along the sides opposite the magazine, which, in one case at least, stopped a shell that in all probability would have blown up the vessel.

The rebels kindled bright fires on both banks of the river, by which the passing boats were not only clearly revealed, but the pilots were confused by them, not knowing exactly the position of these signals. In consequence, some of the gunboats ran out

of their course, and were compelled to turn round under fire. These somewhat eccentric motions of the steamers disconcerted the aim of the rebel gunners, and when to this were added the blinding smoke, the difficulty of estimating distances correctly by the uncertain glare of fires and the flash of guns, and the effect of shot from the guns of the squadron, it is surprising that so many shots took effect.

These night attacks by ships upon forts and batteries in a tortuous river-channel, where the current ran, in some places, five miles per hour, were among the most extraordinary scenes of the war, and it is matter of astonishment that so few vessels were lost; and, when viewed in another light, it seems wonderful that they were injured so much. In every case, very soon after the firing became general, the battle-cloud wrapped every object in the densest darkness, broken only by the momentary, lightning-like gleam of the guns, which only made the sulphurous veil luminous, without disclosing the objects hidden within; and yet the vessels were often so close to the batteries, that the stroke of their shot could be heard on the shore, and the ring as they smote the iron casemates of the gunboats, and the crash of timbers, told that the gunners of the forts were not firing entirely in vain. Some of the vessels were under fire more than two hours, and yet, as already mentioned, no one was killed, and a few only were wounded. In order to show the severity of the fire to which the fleet was exposed, the following extracts are given from letters describing the injuries which some of the iron-clads received, including the sturdy old Benton:

UNITED STATES GUNBOAT LAFAYETTE, }  
DIAMOND ISLAND BEND, BELOW VICKSBURG, April 17, 1863. }

SIR: I have most respectfully to report that, in obedience to your orders of the 10th instant, the gunboat Lafayette, now under my command, passed the batteries at Vicksburg last night, accompanying you with the following portions of your fleet, viz.: Benton (flag), Lafayette (towing a coal-barge and the General Price), Louisville, Mound City, Pittsburg, Carondelet, and three transports, namely: Forest Queen, Henry Clay, and Silver Wave, all of which passed safely down to this point with but trifling injury, except the transport Henry Clay, which caught fire and was burned, and the Forest Queen, which received a

shot between wind and water, and was obliged to come to below Vicksburg.

The *Lafayette* received nine effective round and rifle-cannon shots through her casemates while closely engaged with the rebel batteries. She was struck first in the port waist with a 100-pounder rifle-shot, which passed through obliquely from forward aft to the starboard casemate. The second, a 32-pounder, struck upon the same plate at right-angles, passing through and breaking upon the iron-work and our stern capstan over the boilers. The third, a 100-pounder rifle, through the port wheel-house, port pitman, and through the cylinder timbers and starboard side. Fourth, a 100-pounder rifle, through the lower edge of the iron plating forward of the port wheel-house amidships into the sponson, a few feet short of the port cylinder, in a direct line. Fifth, a 32-pounder, on the port side, abaft the wheel-house, through plating. Sixth, a 32-pounder, on the port bow, through plating, broken. Seventh, a glance shot on the starboard bow port. Eighth, a glance shot on the hog-chain, bending in and through the upper pilot-house. Ninth, grape-shot through smoke-pipe; barge and mainmast slightly injured by shell. In consequence of the difficulty in seeing our position while passing in the smoke, fire, and noise, with the coal-barge and *Price* alongside, she being reported on fire twice, the *Lafayette* came near running into the bank under the batteries at Vicksburg, which enabled the enemy to take unerring aim for the short time we were there. We returned the fire at the same time, but the fighting-bolts of our 24-pounder broke adrift.

The safety of the vessel being paramount to all other advantages that could be derived from random shot, with the *Louisville* afloat of us, and the other gunboats passing us, I discontinued our firing after one or two rounds. The coal-barge was sunk by a shot in her bow. The *Price* cast off after we passed the batteries, and we arrived safely at this place without the loss of a man killed or wounded. We left the Yazoo River at 9.30 P. M., and arrived here at 1.30 A. M., being under fire one hour and twenty minutes.

I am, sir, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. WALKER, *Captain U. S. Navy.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

U. S. STEAMER BENTON, NEW CARTHAGE, LA., April 17, 1863.

SIR: I respectfully submit the following: This vessel, bearing your flag, got under way from our anchorage, near the mouth of the Yazoo, yesterday evening at 9.15, and slowly steamed down toward Vicksburg.

At 11.10 the enemy opened fire upon us with musketry from the upper batteries. At 11.16 the batteries opened upon us, firing slowly at first, but continuing to fire more rapidly as we passed by. At 11.23 we opened upon the batteries and town with the forward and port batteries. We passed within forty yards of the town, and could hear the rattling of falling walls after our fires. At 11.52 the enemy ceased firing upon us. At 1.15 A. M. we passed Warrenton, not a shot being fired at us. At 2.10 came to anchor twelve miles above New Carthage.

We expended the following projectiles: eighteen 9-inch 5" shells; three 9-inch shrapnel; sixteen 5" 42-pounder rifle-shell; two 32-pounder 5" shell; twenty-three stands 32-pounder grape; a total of eighty-one shots.

The damages sustained were as follows: one 32-pounder round shot passed through the corner of the broadside and after-casemate, grazed the coamings of the pitman-hole and struck the "cylinder-timber," and entered about four inches, glanced back, and into a state-room.

A large rifle-shot struck the port casemate about six inches above the upper after-corner of No. 8 port, passing through the two-and-a-half-inch iron, splintering the wood all the way through, and knocking off the planking on the inside six feet in length and six feet wide.

Another shot struck the forward side of No. 7 port, shattering the casemate, and then glanced up and tore away the hammock-nettings about the gangway.

A 10-inch solid round shot struck the port casemate about four feet from the spar-deck, and about six inches from the angle of the forward casemate, passing through the light iron and shattering the casemate from top to bottom, and six feet fore and aft.

Another struck a chain-cable which was suspended over the casemate, cutting the chain. All the damages were on the port side.

The casualties were one officer, Acting Ensign E. C. Brennan, and four men wounded.

Enclosed I send the assistant surgeon's report. I desire to call your attention to the good conduct of Mr. Brennan until he fell at his post.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A. GREER, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

DAVID D. PORTER,

*Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

It will be seen by these reports that the passage of the batteries was not a pleasant pastime, though attended with little loss. But the task of reaching the rear of Vicksburg with the

army was by no means over, when the batteries of Vicksburg had been passed, and the fleet had still very stern work on hand. Grand Gulf lay between the squadron and the point where General Grant intended to cross the Mississippi; and this place had been strongly fortified since Admiral Farragut passed down with the *Hartford*. It was therefore necessary, either to attempt the reduction of these forts, so that the army could land there, and march up in the rear of Vicksburg, or the risk was to be taken of running past these forts also with the army transports. It was finally determined to make an attack on Grand Gulf on the 28th of May, and land there, if possible, the right wing of the army, while the left wing under Sherman, still remaining above Vicksburg, should make, with the gunboats yet above, a strong feint up the Yazoo against the fortifications there, in order to prevent reënforcements being sent from Vicksburg to the assistance of Grand Gulf. This movement was finely executed, and the rebels in that quarter were held in check.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### ATTACK UPON THE BATTERIES AT GRAND GULF.

WHILE this feigned assault was made on the Yazoo forts, and which the country at the time regarded as a failure, the real attack was made upon the batteries at Grand Gulf, in the hope of effecting there a landing for the army. The transports with troops accompanied the gunboats, and it was the intention to pass the batteries with the troops, so soon as the enemy's guns could be silenced.

These forts were three in number, with connecting works, and mounted in all thirteen guns, and a fourth battery was armed with some field-pieces. Among the heavy guns were one 100-pounder, two 64-pounders, two 7-inch rifles, and three 30-pounder Parrott rifles, a formidable armament, especially when it is considered that these guns were planted on high ground, where the gunboats could not reach them by direct fire.

The attack was made in the following order: the Louisville, the Carondelet, the Mound City, and Pittsburg, were ordered to lead the way, pass down and attack the lower batteries, while the Tuscombina, the Benton, and Lafayette, were to engage the upper forts. The vessels designated fought the lower works for three hours, when the rebel guns were silenced; and the gunboats then steamed up to aid in reducing the upper fort, where the resistance was of the most determined character. For two hours and thirty-five minutes longer the battle was continued, when the fire of the enemy slackened somewhat, apparently from the want of ammunition, and Admiral Porter proposed to pass down with the transports. General Grant, however, did not deem it prudent to risk the troops, and therefore landed

them at a point above, and marched them below the fortifications. At 6 o'clock in the evening the fleet again got under way, and attacked the rebel works once more, while the transports all passed safely down under cover of the fire of the gunboats. The severity and long duration of this fight demand a more particular description.

This battle was fought under several disadvantageous circumstances, which should be mentioned in justice to the officers and crews of the fleet. The current of the river at that point is very strong, and was running, at that time, six miles per hour. This, of itself, rendered it exceedingly difficult to manage the heavy iron-clads, deficient as many of them were in steam-power; but, in addition to the strength and swiftness of the stream, there were counter-currents and powerful eddies, by which the gunboats were swept out of their course, and often turned completely round, thus exposing them entirely, and on all sides, to the enemy's fire. Moreover, this was in broad daylight, so that every vessel could be clearly seen, and in the daytime the battle-cloud does not settle so dense, heavy, and motionless, as in the night. It rises, and melts, and drifts away.

Again, the action was at short range, so that muskets and even revolvers were used often, the vessels drifting, at times, within a few yards of the shore. Some of the rebel guns were of large calibre, and some were heavy rifles, and, at the distance at which the battle was fought, the gunboats could scarcely be missed by a skilful gunner. The light plating of the iron-clads did not prove a sufficient protection against the rebel artillery, and the casemates in many instances were bored through and through. The general result was the same as when the Galena fought at Fort Darling. It was found that three-inch plates were easily penetrated by 10-inch solid shot and heavy rifle-shells, and hence the loss of life, and the number of the wounded.

The best method of bringing this scene before the mind of the reader is to present short extracts from the accounts of the officers who were engaged in the fight. The following is from Captain Henry Walke, who commanded the Lafayette:

About 7 o'clock A. M. of the 29th ultimo, the fleet got under way, in answer to your signals, and proceeded down to the rebel batteries of Grand Gulf in the following order: the Pittsburg led the attack with

this vessel, which rounded-to above the upper batteries, and opened a brisk fire upon the enemy with her 100-pounder rifle-guns until the remainder of the fleet had passed down and taken their position, viz : the Pittsburg, Louisville, Mound City, and Carondelet, attacking the lower batteries, while the Benton (flag), Lafayette, and Tuscumbia, engaged the upper batteries. Each vessel rounded-to against the enemy's batteries in order, and kept up a heavy firing with their broadside and bow-guns as they were brought to bear upon the enemy. The Lafayette, after firing thirty-five rounds of 100-pounder rifle-shell and shot, turned her broadside and 11-inch bow-guns upon them, firing with good effect, apparently, until about 10 o'clock A. M. The admiral hoisted the guard-flag (a preconcerted signal) for the Lafayette to change her position from before the upper batteries to the lower batteries, where she proceeded, and continued firing her 11-inch bow-guns, and her 9-inch 100-pounder rifle-guns, and 24-pounder howitzer from the starboard broadside, thus continuing a vigorous and effective firing upon all the batteries, which, while we passed up with the rest of the fleet, were silenced. All the fleet passed above, except the Tuscumbia, landing at Ruth's plantation, in obedience to your signal. The Lafayette was struck by cannon-shot about forty times during the day, five of which only did any serious damage.

I enclose our carpenter's, gunner's, and engineer's reports. Expended one hundred and sixty 11-inch shell and shrapnel, twenty-eight 9-inch, fifty rifle, and ten 24-pounder howitzer.

The officers and crew of the vessel deserve my highest praise for their coolness, courage, active and excellent conduct, during the five hours and five minutes' fighting, none of whom, thank God, were hurt, but Lieutenant William T. Suttrel, slightly wounded.

At 3 P. M. we observed the enemy repairing their shattered batteries, and, by your order, the Lafayette ran down, and with a few rounds from her bow-guns silenced the upper battery and dispersed the rebels, after which we turned her 100-pounder rifle-guns upon them, firing at five-minute intervals until 8 o'clock P. M., when we anchored and piped to supper.

Lieutenant James A. Greer, commanding the flag-ship Benton, gives this account of his share in the fight :

This vessel, bearing your flag, got under way yesterday morning at 6.40 and headed up-stream. After getting the fleet in line, we, at 7.30, slowly steamed down toward the batteries at Grand Gulf. At 7.55 the enemy opened fire on the leading vessel. At 8.13 we opened fire from

the forward battery upon the guns on the bluff; rounded-to with head up-stream and kept firing whenever a gun would bear, the enemy responding. While near the shore the enemy fired upon us with musketry. At 9 a shell penetrated the thin iron on our starboard quarter, and exploded in a state-room, setting it on fire; it was speedily extinguished. At 9.05 a shell from No. 5 gun carried away the enemy's flag-staff; it was soon replaced. At 10.10, having gotten into an eddy, were obliged to round out; did so, and fired with our port and stern guns when they would bear. We, in turning round, dropped downstream fifteen hundred yards, and ran into the bank to aid us in turning round. We then steamed up to the batteries on the bluff again, and continued the engagement. At 12.25 rounded out and stood up-stream to communicate with General Grant, who was on a tug. While going up used our stern-guns. At 12.50 the enemy ceased firing at us, this vessel having been under fire four hours and eleven minutes. At 1.57 tied up to the bank at Hard Times Landing; the other vessels, except the Tuscumbia, following our motions. The following ammunition was expended: seventy 9-inch 5-second shells; forty 9-inch 5-second shrapnel; twenty-nine 9-inch grape; seven 9-inch canister; forty-five 5-second 42-pounder rifle-shells; one 10-second 42-pounder rifle-shell; sixty-nine 5-second 32-pounder canister; thirty 10-second 32-pounder shells; five 32-pounder solid shots; eleven 32-pounder canister; twenty-three 32-pounder grape; nine 50-pounder rifle-shells; eight 50-pounder solid shots—a total of three hundred and forty-seven fires. We were struck forty-seven times—once in the hull, twenty-two times on casemates, and twenty-four times in upper works. The  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron was penetrated twelve times; the  $2\frac{1}{4}$ -inch iron four times, three of which came entirely through the casemate. One shot went through the  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron on after-part of pilot-house and lodged inside, wounding a pilot and shattering the wheel.

The Tuscumbia, under the command of Lieutenant J. W. Shirk, suffered very severely, as appears from the following extract from his official report:

In obedience to your order, we got under way at 7 A. M., and followed the United States gunboat Mound City down the river. At 8.25 we engaged the upper and heaviest fort; the leading vessels having gone down to attack the lower batteries. This ship devoted the whole of her time to the upper fort, from positions above, below, and abreast of it, as the current and eddy made it necessary for us to take, until, at 25 m. P. M., the port engine was disabled, when we endeavored to pass

above by using the propellers, but were unable to stem the current. I therefore was compelled to drop down out of action to find an anchorage.

During the early part of the fight a rifle-shell struck the outer edge of the port shutter of the midship-port, opened it, and entering the turret, exploded inside, killing four men and wounding several others. Another shell struck both shutters of the same port, jamming them so that they could not be used. This deprived me of the use of the midship-gun for the remainder of the action. We used the starboard stern-gun upon the lower battery until a shell entered the after-turret and exploded, disabling every man at the gun but one.

The shell that exploded in the forward-turret threw sparks of fire into the shell-room and magazine passages. I most earnestly request that, when an opportunity offers, a different arrangement of these passages may be made.

We were struck very often upon the forward-turret, but sustained no material damage except the losing of one plate of the armor overboard and the starting of several more. The plates were never put on in a proper manner, and wherever a shot struck the armor the bolts were started. The light wood-work on deck is completely riddled.

Great praise is due the officers and men of this ship for their gallantry and spirit displayed throughout the fight. My thanks are due to the executive officer, Acting-Master A. F. Tayon, who ably seconded me during the battle; also to Acting-Ensigns Marshall, Farrell, Edson, and Dunlap, who had charge of the guns; Assistant-Paymaster George A. Lyon acted as my aide, taking notes, until, with my approbation, he volunteered to assist the medical officer in taking care of the wounded.

The engines were ably managed by Acting Chief-Engineer J. W. Hartupes and his assistants. Pilot Joseph McCamant did his duty faithfully at the wheel until he was wounded, and fainted from loss of blood. Pilot Isaac Ashton performed his duty bravely and well during the whole of the fight. Assistant-Surgeon F. E. Potter was assiduous in his attention to the wounded.

In conclusion, I have to report that the ship will need very extensive repairs before she will again be able to run.

Lieutenant W. R. Hoel furnishes this brief but very significant account:

Although struck by the enemy's shot thirty-five times during the engagement, and severely cut up by them, she is in no way disabled. While engaging the enemy, four hundred and twenty-nine rounds were

fired, principally from her bow and starboard broadside batteries, consisting of shot, shell, shrapnel, grape, and canister. At 1.30 P. M., in obedience to orders (by signal from the Louisville), I withdrew my vessel from the engagement. I regret to have to report the following casualties: killed, six; wounded, thirteen. While passing below and engaging the batteries the same night, I fired twenty-one rounds.

These accounts present in a graphic manner the aspect of the fight, and show the severity of the fire to which the vessels were exposed; and when it is considered that these gunboats were iron-clads, and that on three of them eighteen men were killed and fifty-seven wounded, it is seen that it was indeed a desperate battle, and that the rebel artillery was of the most powerful description.

General Grant having marched the army below the batteries, and the transports having passed them under cover of the fire of the gunboats, the troops were crossed over to the Mississippi shore, and that rapid and successful march was commenced which ended so quickly in the dispersion of the rebel forces in the rear of Vicksburg, and in the complete investment of the city.

On the 3d of May the fleet moved up to attack once more the batteries at Grand Gulf, and found that the works had been abandoned. The earth-banks of the forts had been torn down and scattered by the fire of the gunboats, but the guns, with a few exceptions, were not dismounted. With our forces in the rear, the forts were no longer tenable, and the rebels therefore spiked the large guns and left. The appearance of these batteries, after they were abandoned, is thus described by Admiral Porter:

I have the honor to report that I got under way this morning, with the Lafayette, Carondelet, Mound City, and Pittsburg, and proceeded up to the forts at Grand Gulf for the purpose of attacking them, if they had not retreated. The enemy had left before we got up, blowing up their ammunition, spiking the large guns, and burying or taking away the lighter ones. The forts consisted of thirteen guns in all; the works are of the most extensive kind, and would seem to defy the efforts of a much heavier fleet than the one which silenced them. The forts were literally torn to pieces by the accuracy of our fire. Colonel Wade, the commandant of the batteries, was killed, also his chief of staff. Eleven

men were killed that we know of, and many wounded, so our informant says; he also says no one was permitted to go into the forts after the action except those belonging there. We had a hard fight with these forts, and it is with great pleasure I report that the Navy holds the door to Vicksburg.

Grand Gulf is the strongest place on the Mississippi; had the enemy succeeded in finishing the fortifications, no fleet could have taken them. I have been all over the works, and found them as follows: one fort on Point of Rocks, seventy-five feet high, calculated for six or seven guns, mounting two 7-inch rifles and one 8-inch, and one Parrott gun on wheels (carried off). On the left of this work is a triangular work, calculated to mount one heavy gun. These works are connected with another fort by a covered way and double rifle-pits, extending three-quarters of a mile, constructed with much labor, and showing great skill on the part of the constructor. The third fort commands the river in all directions; it mounted one splendid Blakely 100-pounder and one 8-inch; two 32-pounders were lying bursted and broken on the ground. The gunboats had so covered up every thing with earth that it was impossible to see at a glance what was there. With the exception of the guns that were dismounted or broken, every gun that fell into our hands was in good condition, with a large quantity of ammunition.

This is by far the most extensive built work, with the exception of those at Vicksburg, I have yet seen; and am happy to say we hold it. I am dismounting the guns and getting on board the ammunition; and, as I leave in an hour for the Red River, Lieutenant-Commander Owen will carry out my instructions. I hear nothing of our army as yet. Was expecting to hear their guns as we advanced on the forts.

Since making the above examination, two new forts have been found, nearly finished; they had no guns, but were complete of the kind, as regards position, and had heavy field-pieces in them.

With this movement of General Grant began the last act in the great war drama on the Mississippi. When the lines of investment were formed in the rear of Vicksburg, the question of its capture was virtually settled. The only problem was, how long a time would be required to complete the work.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

OPERATIONS AT AND NEAR VICKSBURG, BETWEEN ITS INVESTMENT  
AND ITS FALL.—LOSS OF THE CINCINNATI AND DE KALB.—PUR-  
SUIT AND CAPTURE OF JOHN MORGAN.

WHEN the Albatross, the Estrella, and Arizona were returning from the attack on Fort De Russey, mentioned in a previous chapter, they met on the Red River a portion of Admiral Porter's fleet going up to destroy that fort. Taking with him the Estrella and Arizona, Porter proceeded up the river.

He found that the works had been abandoned, and all the guns but one 64-pounder had been taken away. A heavy raft was found across the river, an obstruction which had cost, it was said, seventy thousand dollars. Breaking a passage through this by ramming, the fleet went on as far as Alexandria, and took possession of that place. Twenty-four hours after, the advance of General Banks's army came in, and Alexandria was turned over to the military. As the water in the river was beginning to fall, it was deemed best to return with the fleet, particularly as the rebels had lightened all their steamers and taken them up the river three hundred and fifty miles beyond Shreveport. In passing down, the works nearest the river at Fort De Russey were destroyed. Immediately upon returning to Grand Gulf, three gunboats were sent up Black River, by which about three hundred thousand dollars' worth of rebel supplies were destroyed.

During these operations another portion of the Mississippi squadron, under Lieutenant Le Roy Fitch, was engaged in patrolling the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, which were infested with guerilla bands, with which, and with the rebel troops at various points, his vessels had almost daily fights.



These operations with the light-draught boats on the smaller rivers were among the most dangerous, the most perplexing, and the most unsatisfactory of the war. It was a continual skirmish, often with a concealed foe, who would attack, inflict some damage, and disappear. It was necessary to keep the navigation of these rivers open, in order to maintain the army lines of communication, and this involved a service which could not be dispensed with, and yet afforded no opportunity for brilliant achievement. A single letter from Lieutenant Fitch will serve to illustrate this portion of the Navy's work:

U. S. STEAMBOAT *LEXINGTON*, HAMBURG LANDING, *April 28, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that on the 24th instant, while cruising down the river ahead of General Ellet's fleet, I met the steamer *Emma Duncan*, Acting-Master Griswold commanding, coming up to report his vessel for duty. Learning that he had been attacked by a field battery at Green Bottom Bar, and had three men badly wounded, I proceeded on down the river, giving him orders to follow me, in hopes of catching the rebels at or near the same place. Enclosed I send his report; also the surgeon's.

I passed the bar about dusk in the evening, but the enemy was nowhere to be seen. Being short of coal, I proceeded on down to Fort Henry, where I procured some from one of General Ellet's barges, and started back up the river the evening of the 25th instant.

Arriving at the foot of Green Bottom Bar about midnight, I anchored till morning. Still seeing nothing of the enemy, I proceeded on up the river to meet and communicate with General Ellet. The *Emma Duncan* remaining nearly a mile in my rear, caught a ferry flat coming out of a creek after I had passed; the guerillas in the flat jumped out and made their escape in the woods; the flat, however, was destroyed and set adrift. I cruised on up leisurely, keeping a good lookout for the enemy along the right bank, but saw no signs of them till I arrived at Duck River Shoals, where I heard musketry and artillery a short distance (not a mile) ahead. I pushed on over the bar and met General Ellet's fleet just at the head of the shoals, engaging the rebel battery. I was then in good range, and at once opened fire on the enemy. There was not room for his boats to round-to or to back out of the channel; he was therefore compelled to push on over the bar before he could effect a landing. I took the battery side and moved on up to cover his boats as much as possible, at the same time raking the bank with our heavy guns. The ram *Monarch* by this time came in range and opened

fire also. As soon as I rounded the point, the enemy fired a farewell shot at one of the brigade boats, limbered up, and were off; some few sharpshooters remaining behind, fired a few shots at a transport having on board sick and wounded.

I followed on up the bank, throwing shells after them till I thought them out of range, and ceased firing; by this time General Ellet had landed and was pursuing them.

Several of the enemy were found dead on the bank, and many more were dragged off into the woods. I should suppose that their loss in killed and wounded is about twenty-five or thirty.

I believe General Ellet lost two killed and one wounded on his boats; also some horses killed.

About 11 P. M. I left General Ellet at the foot of the bar, and proceeded on up the river with this boat and the Emma Duncan to communicate with the fleet above. I arrived at Eastport in the afternoon of the 27th instant, receiving a communication from General Dodge at Tuscumbia. Enclosed I send a copy of it.

I sent the transports below Big Bend Shoals, and remained at Eastport Landing myself, with the gunboats Emma Duncan and Queen City, till morning, the 28th instant, in hopes of again being able to communicate with General Dodge before moving the transports out of the river. I then returned to Hamburg, and, finding no means of communication there, sent the Covington and Emma Duncan back to Chickasaw, to wait till the morning of the 29th instant, and then, if no messengers arrived from General Dodge, to report back to me at this place.

I will move down from here with the transports to-morrow.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LE ROY FITCH, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral* DAVID D. PORTER,

*commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

The activity of the rebels on the Mississippi rendered it necessary to keep up a constant patrol, though on a larger scale upon that stream. After the investment of Vicksburg an attempt was made to erect a battery at Warrenton, which would prevent supplies from reaching the army from below. They commenced, and had nearly finished a casemated battery, intended to mount there eight 10-inch guns, when it was discovered by the Mound City, that came up from below to reconnoitre. It was constructed by first building a wall of cotton-bales. These were covered with logs; the logs were *plated*

with railroad iron, and then the whole was covered with earth. It would have been, when armed, a very formidable work.

A small party was sent on shore from the Mound City to reconnoitre, who discovered a company of artillerists in the battery; but no guns were mounted as yet. The gunboat then commenced shelling the work, and succeeded in setting fire to the cotton, and soon the whole was in flames, and the work of months was destroyed in an hour.

On the 15th of May, Admiral Porter left temporarily that portion of his fleet which was below Vicksburg, and went up the river and across the peninsula, in order to communicate with the army above the city. On the 18th the roar of the guns in the rear of Vicksburg announced the approach of Grant, and ere long the welcome sight of a portion of our artillery advancing and taking position, showed that this river Gibraltar was at last surrounded. Sherman's division had come in between Snyder's Bluff and the city, and thus the garrisons in the Yazoo fortifications were cut off from support. Two iron-clads and several wooden gunboats were immediately sent up the Yazoo, to open communication with our troops. It was found that the rebels had already evacuated these forts. They had formed a hitherto impregnable flank defence of the city, but were, of course, no longer tenable when a portion of our army lay between them and Vicksburg. The gunboats proceeded to Haines's Bluff, and found a few only of the rebels there, and these remained for the purpose of removing or destroying the ammunition, of which large quantities had been accumulated.

The works at Haines's Bluff were very strong. They mounted fourteen heavy guns—10-inch and 8-inch smooth-bores, and 7½-inch rifles. The rifle-pits connected with the forts were one mile and a quarter in length. The gun-carriages, magazines, and encampments were destroyed, and the gunboats proceeded up the Yazoo for the purpose of destroying or capturing any steamboats which might be found in the river.

This proved to be quite an important expedition. At Yazoo City, where the ram Arkansas was built, the rebels had quite an extensive yard for the construction of steamboats and vessels-of-war, and at the time when our gunboats reached the place three powerful rams were being constructed. One was called

the *Mobile*—a screw vessel, ready for her plating; the *Republic*, a steamer, which was to be fitted for a ram, with an armor of railroad-iron; and on the stocks was a steamer of huge dimensions, three hundred and ten feet in length, and seventy feet beam. It was intended to plate her with  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch iron. She was to have six engines, four side-wheels, and two propellers. Had she been finished according to her design, with a heavy armament, and reliable engines, she might have proved the terror of the Mississippi. But like the rest of the iron-clad navy of the rebels, these rams of the Yazoo came to an untimely end. They were burned, together with the new navy-yard and all its machinery, its saw-mills, its planing-machines, and a large quantity of lumber. Thus the resources of the rebels in the West were being surely and rapidly consumed. The value of the property destroyed at this point was estimated at two millions of dollars, an amount, as in all other cases of destruction of property in this war, taken not only from the rebels, but from the resources of the American people.

From this time the Yazoo and its navigable tributaries were completely under our control, and the supplies of the large garrison at Vicksburg were entirely cut off. After the city was thus invested, the work of the gunboat and mortar fleet was to aid in its reduction by a daily and sometimes a nightly bombardment; the fleet above the town firing upon the upper batteries, and that below upon such portions of the city and its fortifications as lay within reach of their shot and shell. Important assistance was also rendered by the Navy in the siege by landing the heavy guns from the gunboats, as will hereafter be shown.

On the 21st Major-General Grant sent a communication to Admiral Porter, stating that he intended to make a general assault upon the rebel lines on the 22d, and asking for the coöperation of the fleet. To comply with this request six mortars were put in position, and a rapid fire from them was kept up during the night, both upon the city and the rebel batteries. In addition to these, the Benton, Mound City, and Carondelet, were sent up to attack the water-batteries, and to throw shell into any spot occupied by the enemy's troops, in order to prevent repose and to distract their attention.

At 7 o'clock on the morning of the 22d the Mound City went up and over to the Louisiana shore, and attacked the batteries on the hill opposite the mouth of the canal dug by the army. At 8 o'clock she was joined by the Benton, Tuscumbia, and Carondelet, when all the iron-clads united their fire upon the hill-batteries, which were at length silenced. The Benton, Mound City, and Carondelet, then passed the hill-batteries, and went up to engage the works near the water, leaving behind the Tuscumbia, to prevent, if possible, the hill-forts from renewing their fire. The vessels advanced to within less than five hundred yards, and there sustained the fire from the water-batteries; also of one fort on higher ground. The enemy's fire at that short distance was very rapid and accurate, and the gunboats were struck often; but the iron plating glanced many of the shot, and as the vessels fought bows on, the surface exposed was comparatively small, and the casualties were few. The turret of the Tuscumbia, however, was penetrated so as to become untenable, and she dropped down out of range. Admiral Porter describes this fire as "the hottest one the gunboats had ever been under," "but fighting bows on, the shot did little damage." What a sailor calls "little damage" may be estimated from the following report of Ensign Coleman of the injuries received by the Mound City:

U. S. GUNBOAT MOUND CITY, BELOW VICKSBURG, *May 25, 1863.*

SIR: I beg leave respectfully to report the damages received by this vessel in the engagement with the Vicksburg batteries, May 22, 1863.

1. A shot struck and lodged in starboard bow, near the stem, and five feet under water, not doing much damage, the timbers being four or five feet thick.

2. A shot went through the forecastle on port side, into the coal-locker, and lodged in the coal, cutting the deck plank only.

3. A shot on starboard side went through the hammock-netting and starboard chimney at the lower band, tearing the chimney half off, then through the galley and overboard.

4. A shot in front passed through two plates of heavy boiler-iron, the iron of the pilot-house, near deck, and through the deck, cutting away carlin, and lodged in a mess-chest.

5. A shot on starboard side cut through half of the hog-chain stanchion, passed through wheel-house, cutting away iron wheel and brace;

then through steerage, tearing up about eight feet of the plank and breaking carlin and wood-work in ward-room.

6. A shell burst close to No. 6 Dahlgren gun, starboard side, knocking off a small piece of the muzzle.

7. A shot on the starboard side struck the iron near the top, cutting half through and bending one of the plates, knocking out a stanchion and starting the bolts on the inside.

8. A shot on starboard side struck the muzzle of No. 7 gun, 32-pounder, cracking the gun about five inches; then glanced and went through the hammock-netting and four or five clothes-bags, and dropped over alongside pitman.

9. A shot struck iron on starboard side, over shell-room hatch, knocking off the plate, and driving a piece of it, about the size of the ball, through the casemate.

10. A shot on starboard quarter cut away an awning-stanchion and passed through cabin-skylight close to the deck, tearing up the plank.

11. A shot struck port chimney twenty feet from the deck.

12. A shot through brace of forward-stanchion's skylight.

13. A shot on starboard side struck iron plating between guns Nos. 4 and 5, three feet above the water, and glanced off, bending the plates and starting bolts.

14. A shot on starboard side, at shell-room, two feet under water-line, glanced without doing any damage.

15. A shot struck knuckle on port quarter and glanced, knocking a hole in the casemate.

16. The lower block of one of the boat-tackles was shot away and the davit badly bent.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. T. COLEMAN, *Acting Ensign and Executive Officer.*

*Lieutenant-commanding* BYRON WILSON, U. S. N.,

*commanding United States Steamer Mound City.*

Had an edifice on shore of the size of the Mound City been struck by heavy shot, as stated in this report, it is doubtful whether a landsman would have represented the damage as small.

The daily work of the Navy before Vicksburg during the regular siege is set forth in the following letter of the commander of the Benton, Lieutenant James A. Greer :

U. S. GUNBOAT BENTON, BELOW VICKSBURG, May 24, 1863.

SIR: I respectfully submit the following report of the movements of this vessel :

On May 19th got under way from Naval Landing and stood up toward rebel batteries; the Tuscomb and Carondelet in company. At 12.30 P. M. the lower hill-batteries opened fire on us, which we returned at long range; fired seven shots, the other vessels also firing, and then went to the bank and tied up on the Louisiana side. At 4.30 P. M. the three vessels again got under way, and when within range opened on the batteries.

This vessel fired fifty-five times. Toward dark dropped down and tied up to the bank. The rebels fired slowly and deliberately at us, but, fortunately, none of the vessels were struck. At 11 P. M. this vessel and the Carondelet stood up above the canal, on the Louisiana shore, and opened on the town at long range, the enemy firing but a few shots in return. This vessel fired forty-three times, then dropped down out of range.

At 2 A. M., May 20, got under way, and stood up within range of rebel batteries, and fired forty-one times upon them and the town. At 2.30 dropped down out of range; the Carondelet then passed up to shell the town. At 9.10 P. M. got under way, accompanied by the Carondelet and Mound City, and proceeded slowly up toward Vicksburg, crossed over to the Mississippi shore, and approached the hospital battery. At 11.28 opened fire and engaged this battery thirty-three minutes, then dropped down; the Mound City and Carondelet coming up in turns. We fired forty-two times; the enemy responded, but not rapidly; we were struck twice in the upper works; no one was injured.

At 12.30, May 21, tied up to Louisiana shore. At 2.45 this vessel got under way again; was detained some time by tiller-chain parting; then stood up on Louisiana side and fired eleven times upon batteries at long range, then dropped down. The Mound City occupied lower batteries from 8 A. M. till noon; the Carondelet from 1 till 5.

At 5.28 we stood up and opened fire on rebel batteries; fired twenty-six times. The vessels went up in turns during the night and shelled hospital battery and town. At 1 A. M., May 22, this vessel went up and fired twenty-four times, with but one or two shots in return from the rebels.

At 7.30 A. M. this vessel, with the whole squadron, stood up toward Vicksburg, fighting and passing the lower batteries. This vessel advanced well up to the hospital-battery, firing whenever a gun would bear; the enemy firing upon us very rapidly, and from nearly all his batteries. We opened fire at 8.23; at 10.40 the signal to discontinue action was made; we then dropped down, and, after communicating with you, went into the Mississippi shore and tied up.

In this short action we fired two hundred and eighty-three times. We were struck thirteen times—four times at the water-line, once on each bow, and twice on starboard side.

At first the vessel leaked some, but we have it now completely under control. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES A. GREER, *Lieutenant commanding.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, com'dg Mississippi Squadron.*

These four words, closing up, as they often do, the records of severe and sometimes long-continued firing, show very clearly the revolution that iron-clads have wrought in the business of war. If one considers the length of many of these fights, the amount of shot and shell expended, the number of times the vessels were struck by heavy projectiles, and the small loss of life, the immense superiority of the armored ship is clearly seen. It is probable that no wooden ship could have floated for half an hour under such a fire as the iron-clads were more than once exposed to at Vicksburg and Grand Gulf. The wooden ships below New Orleans and at Port Hudson passed the forts and batteries in the night; but the iron-clads were exposed to the fire of heavier guns, in the daytime, and at close quarters, and often for hours together, and, as the reports state, they were almost daily under the fire of the most powerful artillery which the rebels had.

On the 27th of May another attack was made on the Vicksburg batteries at the request of Generals Grant and Sherman. Four gunboats from the fleet below were ordered up to engage the lower batteries as before; while the Cincinnati, from the squadron above the town, was sent down to enfilade some rifle-pits on the left flank of the rebel defences. This movement was made under the impression that the heavy guns had been removed from the river-batteries and placed in the works at the rear of the city. This will appear from the following letter from General Sherman :

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH ARMY CORPS, WALNUT HILLS, May 19, 1863.

DEAR ADMIRAL : My right is on the Mississippi. We have possession of the bluff down a mile or more below the mouth of the bayou. Can't you send immediately a couple of gunboats down ? They can



easily see and distinguish our men, and can silence a water-battery—that is, the extremity of their flank on the river—and enfilade the left flank of their works.

I think nearly all the guns of their upper batteries are moved inside of Vicksburg, and are now on the land front.

You will have no trouble in distinguishing our flank; it is about one-fourth of a mile below a cattle-pen on the immediate shore of the Mississippi.

I would get General Grant to make this request, but he is far on the left flank, and it would take hours to find him.

Truly, yours, W. T. SHERMAN, *Major-General.*

*Admiral PORTER, or Senior Officer at mouth of Yazoo.*

In accordance with the request in this letter, Admiral Porter prepared the Cincinnati for this work. Not feeling certain that the heavy guns had been removed, he used all available means to shield the steamer from shot and shell. He did not rely alone upon the armor-plates, but packed logs and bales of pressed hay wherever they could be used. The Cincinnati went down, only to find that no guns had been removed from the batteries, and she was at once exposed to such a fire as, in a few minutes, completely riddled her, slaughtered her crew, and placed her in a sinking condition. Partially disabled in her steering apparatus, she steamed up the river as well as she was able, ran in-shore, and sank within range of the rebel guns. The brief account of her commander gives the particulars of this gallant but disastrous affair:

MISSISSIPPI SQUADRON, FLAG-SHIP BLACK HAWK, }  
ABOVE VICKSBURG, May 27, 1863. }

SIR: In obedience to your order, the Cincinnati got under way this morning at 7 o'clock and steamed slowly down until a little abreast of where the mortars lay, when we rounded-to. The enemy fired several shots from a gun called "Whistling Dick," but soon gave up.

At half-past 8, with a full head of steam, we stood for the position assigned us.

The enemy fired rapidly, and from all their batteries. When abreast of our position and rounding-to, a ball entered the magazine, and she commenced filling rapidly. Shortly after the starboard tiller was carried away. Before and after this time the enemy fired with great accuracy, hitting us almost every time. We were especially annoyed by plung-

ing shots from the hills, an 8-inch rifle and a 10-inch smooth-bore doing us much damage. The shots went entirely through our protection—hay, wood, and iron.

Finding that the vessel would sink, I ran her up-stream, and as near the right-hand shore as our damaged steering apparatus would permit. About ten minutes before she sank we ran close in, got out a plank and put the wounded ashore. We also got a hawser out to make fast to a tree, to hold her until she sank. Unfortunately, the men ashore at the hawser left it without making fast, the enemy still firing. The boat commenced drifting out, and I sung out to the men to swim ashore, thinking we were in deeper water (as was reported) than we really were. I suppose about fifteen were drowned, and about twenty-five killed and wounded, and one probably taken prisoner, will sum up our whole loss.

The boat sank in about three fathoms of water, lies level, and can easily be raised. She lies within range of the enemy's batteries.

The vessel went down with her colors nailed to the mast, or rather the stump of one, all three having been shot away. Our fire, until the magazine was drowned, was good, and I am satisfied did damage.

We only fired at a two-gun water-battery.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE M. BACHE, *Lieutenant-commanding.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, com'dg Mississippi Squadron.*

To complete this account, the following paragraph from a subsequent report should be added :

I have to make the following additional report of the affair between the Cincinnati and the Vicksburg batteries. The only shot which did not penetrate us, struck the bow casemate, which was well greased. Two shots entered the shell-room, one coming through the fantail and ricochetting up through the recess of the wheel, below the water-line; the other passing through the side, capsizing nearly all the boxes on the port side of the alley. It was immediately filled with water. A third shot entered the magazine; flooded it almost instantly, thereby preventing us from returning (any more) the enemy's fire. I believe she was hulled twice after this, as she was felt to lift bodily without other apparent cause. A heavy rifle-shot penetrated through the pilot-house; the starboard tiller was shot away. All of her staffs were shot away, rendering it necessary to nail the flag to the stump of the fore-staff. Several plunging shots went through the deck. One 9-inch, an 8-inch, a rifled 30-pounder, a 32-pounder, and a 12-pounder howitzer were disabled. Two shots were fired after the vessel sank, one of

them throwing up a shower of mud and water, drowning several men swimming.

In justice to Admiral Porter, and to the commander of the Cincinnati, the letters from General Sherman and the Secretary of the Navy are both presented :

HEADQUARTERS FIFTEENTH ARMY CORPS, WALNUT HILLS, *May 28, 1863.*

DEAR ADMIRAL : I was on the hill to our extreme right yesterday, ready to take advantage of any success to be gained by the gunboat attack on the enemy's left flank. At 9 A. M. I saw four gunboats advance from below and engage the enemy's lower batteries, and soon the Cincinnati came down from above, steering directly for the upper water-batteries.

From our position we could only see the hill which shielded them from the rear. As the gunboat approached she was fired upon from three points. We directed 38-pounder Parrotts, some 6-pounder guns, and our musketry opened on all points within reach, but these batteries were covered by the shape of the ground. As the Cincinnati neared she fired several of her bow-guns ; but, as the current would have carried her below, she rounded-to, firing from her broadside guns, but soon presented her stern. The enemy's shot at first went wild, but soon got her range and struck her several times, and twice right under her stern. She ran slowly up-stream, keeping mid-channel, and when about one and a half miles up, steered directly to the shore in the bend. I saw that her larboard quarter-boat was shot away, and her flag-staff, but otherwise she appeared uninjured. She ran to the shore and soon sank ; her bow appeared down and her stern up, her upper decks out of water. The moment I saw her sink, I sent a company of the Seventy-sixth Ohio to her relief. I could see, by a glass, she was near shore and her people on the bank.

Waiting a couple of hours to hear more definite news from her, I came to the centre of my line and dispatched one of my aides, Lieutenant Hill, to see that all possible assistance should be afforded the crew, and received a message that a boat had been sent to you, and that, as soon as dark would make it safe, you would send a boat down with all the assistance required. I received the accompanying official report. Inasmuch as you must know all, I have no occasion to report more than that the style in which the Cincinnati engaged the batteries elicited universal praise, and I deplore the sad result as much as any one could.

The importance of the object aimed to be accomplished, in my judgment, fully warranted the attempt. It has proved successful, and will

stimulate us to further efforts to break the line which terminates on the Mississippi in such formidable batteries.

I am, with great respect, your obedient servant,

W. T. SHERMAN, *Major-General.*

*Admiral D. D. PORTER, commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

NAVY DEPARTMENT, June 12, 1863.

SIR : Acting Rear-Admiral Porter has forwarded to the Department copies of your reports of the 27th and 29th ultimo, detailing the circumstances of the loss of the United States steamer Cincinnati, under your command, in an attack upon the Vicksburg batteries.

Whilst regretting the loss of a ship that has so often successfully engaged the enemy, the sad casualties attending it, and the sorrows that have been brought to the hearts of the families of those who gave up their lives in the service of their country, it is gratifying to feel that the officers and crew of the Cincinnati performed their duty nobly and faithfully. All reports yet received testify to this fact; and General Sherman, with whom you were directed especially to coöperate, and who was an eye-witness, says, "the style in which the Cincinnati engaged the batteries elicited universal praise."

Amidst an incessant fire of shot and shell, even when the fate of the vessel had been sealed, and destruction both from the elements and the enemy was threatened, the officers and men appear to have stood bravely at their posts, and it is a proud record of the Cincinnati that when her last moments came, "she went down with the colors nailed to the mast."

It is with no ordinary pleasure that I express to you, and to the surviving officers and crew of the Cincinnati, the Department's appreciation of your brave conduct.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Lieutenant GEORGE M. BACHE,*

*Late in command of U. S. Steamer Cincinnati, Miss. Squadron.*

On the 1st of June a second expedition was sent up the Yazoo for the purpose of destroying stores and steamboats, if any could be found. The little fleet consisted of the De Kalb and four wooden gunboats. They reached a point fifteen miles from Fort Pemberton, where our squadron had formerly been compelled to turn back when approaching from the Mississippi. There they found four fine steamers sunk on a bar, and completely blockading the channel. Lieutenant Walker, finding

it impossible to penetrate this barrier, and being also unable to move the boats, was compelled to burn them. He also passed up the Big Sunflower one hundred and eighty miles, when he was stopped by shoal water. In this river he found and destroyed several small steamers. The fact casually mentioned in this report of a river navigable for steamers one hundred and eighty miles, whose name had scarcely been heard of at the North before the war, shows the almost unlimited means of communication, and of obtaining supplies, the South possessed, and that without our river squadrons the rebellion could not have been subdued. During the month of June the army and the fleet were jointly and harmoniously engaged in the laborious and perilous work of the siege of this almost impregnable stronghold. The lines in the rear of the city were pushed close up to the rebel works, and no one could show a head or hand on either side with impunity. A shot was sure to follow the slightest exposure. Night and day, shot and shells and bombs from the huge mortars fell in every part of the city and the rebel works; the cattle were killed, the buildings were shattered, and property of all kinds destroyed, and, at the close of the month, so complete was the investment that famine threatened the inhabitants and the garrison; and when, on the anniversary of the birth of the republic, this river fortress yielded, all food had been exhausted, and starvation or surrender was their only alternative. The following extract from Admiral Porter presents a good summary of operations:

History has seldom had an opportunity of recording so desperate a defence on one side, with so much courage, ability, perseverance, and endurance on the other; and, if ever an army was entitled to the gratitude of a nation, it is the Army of the Tennessee and its gallant leaders.

The Navy has necessarily performed a less conspicuous part in the capture of Vicksburg than the Army; still it has been employed in a manner highly creditable to all concerned.

The gunboats have been constantly employed below Vicksburg in shelling the works, and with success, coöperating heartily with the left wing of the Army.

The mortar-boats have been at work for forty-two days, without intermission, throwing shells into all parts of the city, even reaching the works in the rear of Vicksburg and in front of our troops, a distance of

three miles. Three heavy guns, placed on scows—a 9-inch, 10-inch, and a 100-pound rifle—were placed in position a mile from the town, and commanded all the important water-batteries. They have kept up an accurate and incessant fire for fourteen days, doing all the damage that could be done by guns under such circumstances. Five 8-inch, two 9-inch, two 42-pounder rifles, and four 32-pounder shell-guns have been landed, at the request of the different generals commanding corps, from the gunboats, and mounted in the rear of Vicksburg, and whenever I could spare the officers and men from our small complement, they were sent to manage the guns—with what ability I leave to the general commanding the forces to say.

In the mean time I stationed the smaller class of gunboats to keep the banks of the Mississippi clear of guerillas, who were assembling in force, and with a large number of cannon, to block up the river and cut off the transports bringing down supplies, reinforcements, and ammunition for the army. Though the rebels, on several occasions, built batteries, and with a large force attempted to sink or capture the transports, they never succeeded, but were defeated by the gunboats with severe loss on all occasions.

Without a watchful care over the Mississippi, the operations of the Army would have been much interfered with; and I can say, honestly, that officers never did their duty better than those who have patrolled the river from Cairo to Vicksburg. One steamer only was badly disabled since our operations commenced, and some six or seven men killed and wounded. While the Army have had a troublesome enemy in front and behind them, the gunboats, marine-brigade, under General Ellet, and a small force of troops under Generals Dennis and Mower, have kept at bay a large force of rebels, over twelve thousand strong, accompanied by a large quantity of artillery. Though offered battle several times and engaged, they invariably fled, and satisfied themselves by assaulting half-disciplined and unarmed blacks.

The capture of Vicksburg leaves us a large army and naval force free to act all along the river, and I hope soon to add to my department the vessels which have been temporarily lost to the service, viz., the *Indianola* and *Cincinnati*.

The effect of this blow will be felt far up the tributaries of the Mississippi; the timid and doubtful will take heart, and the wicked will, I hope, cease to trouble us for fear of the punishment which will sooner or later overtake them.

There has been a large expenditure of ammunition during the siege. The mortars have fired seven thousand mortar-shells, and the gunboats

four thousand five hundred; four thousand five hundred have been fired from the naval guns on shore, and we have supplied over six thousand to the different army corps.

The letter of the Secretary of the Navy should have a place here:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *July 13, 1863.*

SIR: Your dispatch of the 4th instant, announcing the surrender of Vicksburg, on the anniversary of the great historic day in our national annals, has been received. The fall of that place insures a severance of the rebel territory, and must give to the country the speedy uninterrupted navigation of the rivers which water and furnish the ocean outlet to the great central valley of the Union. For the past year the key to the Mississippi has been Vicksburg, and so satisfied of this was the rebel chief who pioneered the rebellion and first gave the order to open the fires of civil strife, that he staked his cause upon its retention. By the herculean efforts of the Army, under the able leadership of General Grant, and the persistent and powerful coöperation of the Navy, commanded by yourself, this great result, under the providence of Almighty God, has been achieved. A slave empire, divided by this river into equal parts, with liberty in possession of its banks, and freedom upon its waters, cannot exist. The work of rescuing and setting free this noble artery, whose unrestricted vital current is essential to our nationality, commenced with such ability by the veteran Farragut and the lamented Foote, and continued by Davis, is near its consummation. You have only to proceed onward and meet that veteran chief whose first act was to dash through the gates by which the rebels assumed to bar the entrance to the Mississippi, whose free communication to and above New Orleans he has ever since proudly maintained.

When the squadrons of the upper and lower Mississippi shall combine, and the noble river be again free to a united people, the nation will feel its integrity restored, and the names of the heroic champions who signalized themselves in this invaluable service will be cherished and honored. Present and future millions, on the shores of those magnificent rivers which patriotism and valor shall have emancipated, will remember with unceasing gratitude the naval heroes who so well performed their part in these eventful times.

To yourself, your officers, and the brave and gallant sailors, who have been so fertile in resources, so persistent and enduring through many months of trial and hardship, and so daring under all circum-

stances, I tender, in the name of the President, the thanks and congratulations of the whole country on the fall of Vicksburg.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Rear-Admiral DAVID D. PORTER,

*commanding Mississippi Squadron, Vicksburg, Miss.*

Thus terminated one of the most remarkable sieges of modern times, where all that persistent courage could accomplish, aided by great natural advantages, and all the skill and appliances of scientific war, was done by the rebel garrison, a fact sufficiently attested by the long period in which the garrison defeated and defied every effort which could be made by accomplished commanders on land and water, with every formidable weapon known to the military art. The reduction of Vicksburg was a work undertaken by our officers and men as a thing to be done, whatever it might cost of labor, money, time, or blood; and it was defended with a firmness and activity inspired by the well-known fact, that should Vicksburg be captured, the cause of the rebellion would be hopeless. When our troops entered Vicksburg, the great continental stream was restored to the Union, never to be separated again. Port Hudson, as a matter of course, surrendered almost immediately.

About the time of the fall of Vicksburg, the rebels on the west side of the river made several attempts to get a foothold upon the bank of the Mississippi, for the purpose of cutting off supplies, and intercepting communication with the army. These attacks, some of which were conducted by large bodies of troops, were often met by the gunboats, which forced the enemy into disastrous retreat, pursued by the far-reaching shells of the heavy guns. At Milliken's Bend our forces were overpowered, and driven back and down the river-bank; but when the pursuing rebels appeared upon the edge of the bank, they were met by a murderous fire from the gunboats, and driven at once in confusion away, leaving a large number of dead upon the field. In repelling these attacks from the western shore, the marine brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Alfred W. Ellet, performed very valuable service. The rebels were very active in watching the plantations near the river, which were worked



by Northern or Union men, and whenever an opportunity presented, the crops and machinery were destroyed and the negro workmen carried away. General Ellet and his marine brigade were very useful in preventing and punishing such depredations.

On the morning of the 4th of July, a very formidable attack, with eighteen thousand men, under General Holmes, was made on Helena. It was a part of the army of General Price, and the intention was to relieve Vicksburg by seizing Helena, and cutting off the transports and supplies. General Prentiss, who commanded at Helena, had only three thousand five hundred men. The rebels succeeded in driving in our outposts, and obtained possession of the high ground commanding the town, when they were unexpectedly opened upon by the shell-guns of the Tyler. The result is well described by Lieutenant Phelps, of the Eastport.

U. S. IRON-CLAD RAM EASTPORT, HELENA, ARKANSAS, *July 8, 1863.*

SIR: General Holmes, with a reported force of eighteen thousand rebels, attacked this place at daylight on the morning of the 4th instant, and was repulsed after a hard-contested fight of several hours' duration.

The enemy attacked the centre of the defences, and carried the rifle-pits and a battery upon the crest of the hills in the rear, which commanded not only Helena itself, but also all the other defensive works, including Fort Curtis. After possessing himself of that position, he pushed large forces down the slope of the ridge into the gorges, and his sharpshooters began the work of driving the artillerists from the guns in the main fort. Rebel guns, both above and below the town, had been planted upon commanding positions, and opened fire upon the line of defensive works across the river bottom, about one thousand yards in width, and his troops were in force near them to secure the advantages the capture of the works upon the hills would offer for closing upon the town from both directions along the river bottom. The Tyler had been covering the approach by the old town road; but Captain Pritchett discovered the enemy pressing down the hillside after the capture of the battery in the centre, and took up such a position that, while his broad-side guns poured a destructive fire upon the slopes and enfiladed the ravines, his stern-guns effectually silenced the rebel battery below, and his bow-guns played simultaneously upon the upper one. The slaughter of the enemy at this time was terrible, and all unite in describing the horrors of that hillside and the ravines after the battle as baffling description, the killed being literally torn to pieces by shell, and the

avenging fire of the gunboat pursued the enemy two or three miles to his reserve forces, creating a panic there which added not a little to the end of victory.

The enemy's loss is very heavy. Our forces have buried three hundred and eighty of his killed, and many places have been found where he had himself buried his dead. His wounded number eleven hundred, and the prisoners are also eleven hundred. Our cavalry forces are hourly discovering dead and wounded in the surrounding country, and are bringing in stragglers and deserters. Boats passing up the river for two days after the battle were continually hailed by deserters from the rebel ranks wishing to get on board to escape.

An examination of the field, and the reports I hear, convince me that the Tyler contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy, and the terrible slaughter in his ranks is largely hers. It is due to Captain Pritchett to add that he took up an admirable position, and used his battery in a manner alike creditable to himself and to his officers and men.

First at Belmont, then at Pittsburg Landing, and now here, the Tyler has been of inestimable value, and has saved the fortunes of the day. The garrison, numbering but three thousand three hundred men, with lines entirely too extensive for such a force, evidently fought with a courage and determination without superior example in this war.

Our loss in killed and wounded is about one hundred and eighty.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. L. PHELPS, *Lieutenant-Commander,*

*commanding Second Division Mississippi Squadron.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral* DAVID D. PORTER,

*commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

About the middle of July it was ascertained that the rebels were fortifying Yazoo City, for the purpose of making it a base from which to collect supplies for their army; it was determined to send a joint army and navy expedition to check their operations. The iron-clad Baron de Kalb, and three small gunboats, with five thousand troops, were sent up the river for this purpose. It was found that strong batteries had been erected, and these the iron-clads attacked. After testing their strength, a combined assault was arranged, which resulted in the speedy capture of the rebel works and nearly three hundred prisoners. After the action was over, the De Kalb ran

upon a torpedo, which exploded and injured her so that she sank in fifteen minutes. Seventeen of these infernal machines had been planted in the river without connecting wires, or any thing which might indicate their presence. All the vessels but the De Kalb passed safely over them, owing to a rise in the river. Five of the largest and best boats on the Western rivers, which the rebels had taken up the Yazoo for safety, were burnt by them to prevent them from falling into our hands, and one with six heavy guns was captured. As the people of Yazoo City gave no notice of the existence of torpedoes, which through some former understanding they were expected to do, General Herron seized three thousand bales of cotton as a compensation for the De Kalb. The enemy's loss of property on this occasion was estimated at two millions of dollars. An expedition was soon after sent to attempt to recover the De Kalb, but she was found to be too much injured to be raised, but her guns, stores, and iron-plating were saved. The rebels, as they themselves reported, set fire to and destroyed fourteen other steamers up the Yazoo, on board of which was the machinery that they intended to take to Selma, Georgia, for the gunboats then being built at that place.

One of the somewhat eccentric and amusing operations of the river navy was the pursuit of the land force of John Morgan up the Ohio River. The well-known raid of this guerilla chief into Indiana and Ohio need not be here described. It was a bold dash into the North, and would have been a complete success, but for the interposition of the gunboats.

Among other novel craft intended for the Western rivers were some small light-draught "*tin-clads*," as they were called, armored only with boiler-iron, thick enough to resist a musket-ball. They were intended as a police force to patrol the smaller streams, and to run upon the Ohio River in low water, to prevent the crossing of any rebel bands that might attempt to plunder on the north bank of the river.

John Morgan conceived the idea of making a sudden raid into Indiana, and then marching into Ohio, with some hope that he might be fortunate enough to capture Cincinnati, or at least lay it under contribution. He succeeded in getting his marauding band across the river into Indiana, and then com-

menced a march up the Ohio, not venturing far from the river, lest he might be cut off from his proposed line of retreat. He therefore marched nearly parallel to the stream, laying the inhabitants under contribution as he went, proceeding at first quite leisurely, as if he were monarch of the country, making a triumphal procession. For a few days he enjoyed it greatly.

The Union armies were far to the south of him, in Kentucky and Tennessee; and he and his followers held a short revel among the fat things of the Indiana and Ohio farmers, with Indianapolis and Cincinnati tempting them in the not remote distance. Morgan fell into the snare so often spread for great conquerors. Like Hannibal at Cannæ, he delayed among the sweets. He expected, so soon as threatened, to slip across the Ohio, and away into sympathizing Kentucky. But sooner than he thought, an avenging force was on his track—the country was rising in the interior, on his left; and when he turned to the river there were the tin-clads, with their grim batteries, ready to welcome him with shells and grape and canister. Morgan moved on up the river, and the gunboats did the same, keeping abreast of his column, and shelling it whenever it appeared in sight. A fleet of gunboats in pursuit of a flying land force was a new feature of war, but it was very effective.

Morgan suddenly found himself in a trap. He could not retreat, for a strong force was in his rear; he could not turn into the interior, for there he would certainly be cut off; he could not cross the river at any of the summer fords, for the gunboats met him at all such points, and he could not halt, for then he would be intercepted in front. His only possible hope of escape was in passing rapidly on till he could reach shoal water in the Ohio, above which the gunboats could not pass; and it was necessary to do this before a force sufficient to stop him could be collected in his front; and therefore he hurried on, heading for the sources of the Ohio, keeping only a few miles from the river, seeking for an opportunity to cross, and finding none, for the gunboats kept steadily on, holding themselves night and day just abreast of his force.

For about five hundred miles up the river this strange march and pursuit continued, Morgan's force daily diminishing in skirmishes and by desertions, and none of the Northern sympa-

thizers with rebellion hastening to his standard, as he had been led to expect, till at length he saw that his case was hopeless, unless he could elude the gunboats, and this he vainly endeavored to do, until, hemmed in between the tin-clads and the troops, he was captured at length on the upper Ohio. The wonder was, not that he and his freebooters were taken, but that it was possible for him, with that contemptible force, to march five hundred miles through Indiana and Ohio without being sooner secured. It shows how small a disciplined body can march through a densely-populated country with almost perfect impunity, so far as the inhabitants are concerned. Morgan marched round Cincinnati, and came within a few miles of the city; and, for aught that appears, he might have marched into it, and closed his raid by one grand revel there. Even the gunboats could not have disturbed him then, for they would not have destroyed the town; and it would have been more glorious for John to have perished there, like Alexander in Babylon, than to be snared as he was, like a wild beast in the thickets on the river-banks, and then, with shaved head and striped garments, be placed among the convicts of the Ohio penitentiary.

As we look back on Morgan's expedition, it appears more like an expensive frolic on a grand scale than like serious war; and while, in one view of the case, it appears like a spiteful revenge to thrust this would-be Robin Hood into a felon's cell, thus rudely quenching all the light of the romance of his excursion, and considering that, with successful impudence, he had defied two great and populous States; on the other hand, it must not be forgotten, that if a man chooses to engage in such expensive amusements, and makes himself sport with property and life, it is only just that he should endure the penalty. Lieutenant Le Roy Fitch has given an interesting account of a part of this pursuit:

U. S. STEAMER MOOSE, BUFFINGTON ISLAND, *July 19, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to state, that since my last report regarding Morgan, I have followed on up the river, keeping on his right. In some instances I was compelled to get out warps to get over the falls, shoals, and swift water, but I had determined to cut him off at all hazards.

This morning I had the good fortune to intercept him just above

this island, making for the river and attempting to ford. I at once engaged him, drove him from the banks, and captured two pieces of his artillery, a portion of his baggage-train, horses, small-arms, etc. During this time General Judah was pressing on his rear.

He did not engage us over an hour, when his forces broke in the utmost confusion, throwing away their arms and clothing, and taking to the hills; a portion, however, moved up along the bank in hasty retreat, but I followed them so closely that they soon broke, and disappeared up the ravines and over the hills. In this column moving up along the bank were several buggies and carriages, which were abandoned to us. One of the carriages, in which Morgan was said to be riding, was upset by one of our shells, and both horses disabled. The road along the bank was literally strewn with his plunder, such as cloth, boots, shoes, small-arms, and the like; but I had not time to land and take possession of these things, as I wished to keep on up the river with the remnant of his scattered band, knowing that General Judah would look out for those left in the rear. About fifteen miles above this point, I again fell in with another portion of his forces fording. The current was so very swift and the channel so narrow, that it was some time before I could get within range of them. As soon as possible I opened fire on them, killing two, and causing many of the horses to leave their riders in the water. Some had already got across; but many put back, and again took up the river.

It was reported afterward that some twenty-five or thirty were drowned. I left standing on both banks some fifteen or twenty horses without riders; but had not time to stop for them. Pushing on up the river, I again saw another squad of some twenty-five or thirty crossing; but could not, in consequence of very shoal and swift water, get within range of them till they had crossed.

Having reached as high as it was safe for me to venture at this stage of water, and the river still falling, I dropped down below Buffington Island, where I will remain till morning, and then proceed below Leertast Falls.

Although I could get but two vessels (the *Moose* and *Alleghany Belle*) in the engagement to-day, owing to the numerous shoals and shape of the river, yet I can testify to the energetic, prompt, and efficient part the officers and crews of the steamers *Reindeer*, *Naumkey*, *Victory*, and *Springfield* took in the chase.

The officers and crew of this vessel and the *Alleghany Belle* acted in the most commendable manner, and although many of them had never before been under fire, they did their duty well.

I know not the number of killed, wounded, and prisoners, but am told the enemy suffered severely, and that nearly the entire force was captured.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LE ROY FITCH, *Lieutenant-Commander.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral* DAVID D. PORTER,

*commanding Mississippi Squadron.*

General Burnside expressed his satisfaction in the following letter :

CINCINNATI, July 31, 1863.

SIR: It affords me great pleasure to bear testimony to the efficient services performed by the gunboats of the Upper Ohio Squadron, under the command of Lieutenant-Commander Le Roy Fitch, in the pursuit of the rebels under John H. Morgan. Too much praise cannot be awarded the naval department at this place, for the promptness and energy manifested in this movement. I would also gladly bear testimony to the faultless and efficient services of Acting-Master A. H. Bowen, whose hearty and energetic coöperation in this pursuit, and, in fact, every movement of his connected with the Navy since I first assumed command of this department, has been attended with most beneficial results. The brilliant success which has attended the joint operations of the Army and Navy in this movement gives abundant evidence of the good feeling between these two efficient arms of the service, and promises much for the future success of all such operations.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. E. BURNSIDE, *Major-General.*

*Admiral* PORTER, *commanding Mississippi Fleet.*

Secretary Welles also thought this performance worthy of special notice, as appears from his letter to Lieutenant-Commander Fitch :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, July 27, 1863.

SIR: Since your attachment to the Mississippi Squadron, it has been gratifying to the Department to observe the commendable zeal, as shown by reports to it, displayed by you in the execution of the duties with which you were intrusted.

In affording convoy on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, in punishing and dispersing the guerilla bands which infested the banks of those streams, and in your timely and important assistance to the garri-

son at Fort Donelson, when attacked on the 3d of February last, by the rebels under General Wheeler and others, you have acted with promptness, and reflected credit on the naval service.

Your recent pursuit of the flying guerilla Morgan—following him upward of five hundred miles, intercepting him, and frustrating him in his attempt to recross the Ohio, capturing his train, a portion of his guns, and routing his band, all of which materially crippled his strength, and led to his final capture—gives additional evidence of your zeal and ability, and reflects additional credit on the service and yourself.

The Department takes pleasure in expressing its appreciation of your meritorious services; and thanks you and those under your command for your many blows to the rebellion, and active measures for the perpetuation of the Union.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Lieutenant-Commander LE ROY FITCH, U. S. N.,*

*commanding U. S. Steamer Moose, Mississippi Squadron.*

These and a few minor expeditions bring down the operations on the Mississippi to the 1st of October, 1863. The Mississippi and its tributaries were once more clear and under the control of the rightful Government, with the single exception of the upper portion of the Red River, which was yet to be the scene of a very extraordinary naval performance. The rebellion had received its death-blow, but some of its dying struggles were dangerous and fierce. Science, skill, dash, and patriotic courage, fertility in resource, and long endurance in the execution of plans, had characterized both officers and men in the many wearisome months of exhausting labor on the Western rivers; the Army and Navy had worked in harmony, assisting and vying with each other, and at length the vast work was accomplished, and the great continental river was once more open to the sea.

We must now turn back a little, and take up the history of the naval war on the sea-coast, beginning with the operations at Charleston.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### OPERATIONS PRELIMINARY TO THE BLOCKADE AND SIEGE OF CHARLESTON.

SOUTH CAROLINA was properly regarded as the originator of the treason whose natural fruit was the rebellion and the war. In her arrogant and self-conceited public men was seen the highest form of manhood which the slave system was capable of producing. The South Carolina slaveholder exhibited, more nearly than the Virginian, the ultimate effect of slavery upon character, the perfected slave-owning man. The lust and pride of power were so pampered by this ownership of men, this contemptuous denial unto others of all right and privilege, that the absolute monarch of the plantation spurned even the control of lawful government, and taught defiance of national authority and nullification of national law, and called this treasonable doctrine a chivalrous assertion of the rights of freedom, confounding lawlessness with liberty. The principles of the South Carolina miscalled statesmen, when analyzed, show first, independence for each State of all national control; second, entire liberty for each slave-lord to work his own will upon his plantation, unrestrained by any superior power. Such doctrines lead inevitably to treason and rebellion. The Southern politicians proved themselves to be incapable of statesmanship. They misunderstood utterly the real nature of Northern civilization, perceiving neither its principles nor its tendencies, and with the magnificent result of free institutions, the marvel of the modern world, stretching across a continent before their eyes, turned with barbarian blindness to glorify the poverty, the ignorance, the brutality with which they were cursing their

beautiful heritage, and changing the fairest portion of our land into a desert.

Insolently assuming a superiority over Northern men, for which claim there was no foundation, either in original endowment or subsequent culture, even in their foremost men, they underrated even more wildly than the savages of the plains the military power and resources of the North. In fact, the mis-called civilization of slavery was a gigantic sham, an imposition on the world's credulity, whose emptiness, and untidiness, and loathsomeness the war revealed to all men, except a few of the blindest, such as Carlyle and Ruskin, who, apparently more ignorant than schoolboys should be of the true condition of America, and misunderstanding both the objects and results of the war, saw in the destruction of slavery, not the elevation and cultivation of a race, but the illegal dethroning, by a fanatical democratic mob, of the patriarchal, kingly demigods, who were benevolently endeavoring by whip, and torture, and exhausting toil, to open a new way to civilization for the negro by the *downward path* through ignorance and brutehood.

It was fitting that South Carolina should take the lead in the greatest crime against God and man that has cursed and disgraced these modern times; and it was only natural when Charleston opened the sorrowful tragedy of the war by the cowardly attack on the handful of men in Sumter, and when she carried her exultation to the verge of madness, that the North should regard her as the chief offender, the contriver of this bloody mischief, and upon that city for a time was concentrated the wrath of the country, demanding that the national flag and honor should be speedily and fully avenged. Public sentiment compelled the Government to make an early demonstration against Charleston. The first step was an attempt to close the harbor by a strong blockading squadron. At the same time a futile effort was made to obstruct the ship-channel by the sinking of what was called the stone-fleet, a measure spoken of in the first volume, and which so alarmed and irritated England as to cause her to protest strongly against this blocking up a highway of the nations. But as the sunken hulks served as guides to indicate the channel, instead of obstructing it, the anger of the British statesmen gradually subsided. To

establish an effectual blockade of Charleston is a very difficult thing, and in the ordinary method and with wooden ships it could never have been done. The harbor was not closed until Admiral Dahlgren took the command of the squadron and brought the Monitors within the bar. The ordinary position of the blockading fleet, until after the attack by Du Pont, was about four miles from the land, and it was not a very difficult feat for the English steamers with skilful pilots to pass through the line of blockaders in the night, and pass at daylight into the harbor by some one of the numerous channels. The city could also be approached by small steamers from the northeast by Bull's Bay by an interior channel; while Stono and other inlets were open at the southwest, there was also an interior steamboat channel and a railroad to Savannah. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that in the early part of the war the trade of Charleston was not very seriously interrupted. Certain it is, that for a considerable time the rebels received at this point, from their English friends, large supplies of goods and munitions of war.

There were three methods by which it was thought Charleston might be successfully attacked: one was, by approaching it from the northeast by Bull's Bay; another to make the assault by passing or capturing the forts in the harbor; and a third by passing up the inlets to the southwest of the city, obtaining there a lodgment for a land force, and thus turn the strong fortifications of the harbor. No serious demonstration was made by the way of Bull's Bay, and by neither of these methods could the rebel city be captured. During the year 1862 little was done before Charleston except to maintain, as far as possible, the efficiency of the blockade, and to reconnoitre in all directions to discover some practicable method of approach. There was no sufficient land-force to support any operations of the squadron, and Charleston remained secure.

On the 13th of May, 1862, the monotony of blockade life was broken by an achievement of a slave, which deserves to rank among the heroic deeds of the war. There was a very fine armed dispatch and transportation steamer belonging to General Ripley's engineer department, whose business it was to run from point to point in the harbor on the various errands of





Drawn by M. T. Whitney U. S. N.

# THE "MONITOR"

*A full length view of the "Monitor" as she appeared in 1862.*

The Monitor & Murrells Bay, Aug. 3, 1862, T. B. Rowley, N.Y.





the rebel government. Her pilot was a very intelligent slave, Robert Small, and he conceived the bold idea of carrying the steamer in the early morning out of the harbor and delivering her to the commander of the blockading squadron. It was boldly conceived and bravely done, one of the earliest of many indications during the war of what this down-trodden race is capable. He left the government wharf openly, as if on ordinary business, with the palmetto and confederate flags flying, and passing the forts with the usual salute, steamed rapidly on and was soon beyond the range of the outmost gun, when he hauled down the confederate flag and hoisted a white one just in season to prevent the fire of one of the blockaders which was watching his course.

Admiral Du Pont pays the following tribute to this dark-skinned hero, but he doubted whether the Government would recognize as a lawful prize a vessel captured by a slave. The subsequent events of the war caused men to see more clearly.

FLAG-SHIP *WABASH*, PORT ROYAL HARBOR, S. C., *May 14, 1862.*

SIR: I enclose a copy of a report from Commander E. G. Parrott, brought here last night by the late rebel steam-tug *Planter*, in charge of an officer and crew from the *Augusta*. She was the armed dispatch and transportation steamer attached to the engineer department at Charleston, under Brigadier-General Ripley, whose barge, a short time since, was brought out to the blockading fleet by several contrabands.

The bringing out of this steamer, under all the circumstances, would have done credit to any one. At four o'clock in the morning, in the absence of the captain, who was on shore, she left her wharf close to the government office and headquarters, with palmetto and confederate flags flying, passed the successive forts, saluting as usual by blowing her steam-whistle. After getting beyond the range of the last gun, she quickly hauled down the rebel flags and hoisted a white one.

The *Onward* was the inside ship of the blockading fleet in the main channel, and was preparing to fire when her commander made out the white flag. The armament of the steamer is a 32-pounder or pivot, and a fine 24-pounder howitzer. She has, besides, on her deck four other guns—one 7-inch rifled—which were to have been taken the morning of the escape to the new fort on the middle ground. One of the four belonged to Fort Sumter, and had been struck in the rebel attack on the fort on the muzzle. Robert, the intelligent slave and pilot of



the boat, who performed this bold feat so skilfully, informed me of this fact, presuming it would be a matter of interest to us to have possession of this gun. This man, Robert Small, is superior to any who have come into our lines—intelligent as many of them have been. His information has been most interesting, and portions of it of the utmost importance.

The steamer is quite a valuable acquisition to the squadron by her good machinery and very light draught. The officer in charge brought her through St. Helena sound, and by the inland passage down Beaufort River, arriving here at 10 o'clock last night.

On board the steamer, when she left Charleston, were eight men, five women, and three children.

I shall continue to employ Robert as a pilot on board the Planter for the inland waters, with which he appears to be very familiar. I do not know whether, in the views of the Government, the vessel will be considered a prize; but, if so, I respectfully submit to the Department the claims of this man Robert and his associates.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

F. S. DU PONT, *Flag-Officer commanding, etc.*

*Hon. GIDEON WELLES, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

As one of the consequences of the information given by Robert Small, an expedition was fitted out to take possession of Stono Inlet, in the expectation that the troops then in the vicinity of Charleston might be landed on the southwest of the city, and thus the harbor fortifications, as before stated, would be turned. So far as the Navy was concerned, the movement was successful, as appears from the letter of Commander Drayton:

U. S. STEAMER PAWNEE, STONO, May 30, 1862.

SIR: In obedience to your orders of the 28th instant, I entered this place the following morning, but not without some difficulty; for, although it was at the very top of the tide and in the best water, my vessel struck heavily twenty times, and I am satisfied that every vessel drawing more than nine feet must always do so.

I found that Captain Marchand had arrived here the evening before with the Ellen, and had already ordered almost every thing that I had intended doing myself. Two vessels had been sent to look for the battery that had fired on the Unadilla, and Lieutenant-commanding Collins, on his return, reported that it had been removed to Charleston, probably having thrown the guns overboard, as some were felt under the

mud, belonging either to this battery or to an earth one which was destroyed by him.

I found the Pembina and Huron a little above Legaréville, the Ottawa lower down, and with the three vessels went up until, at the last bend of the river before coming to Wappoo Cut, we opened fire on a small steamer which was seen near that place, when a fire was opened on us from a very heavy rifled gun, some of whose shot and shell fell a little short. Here I left the Pembina and Huron for the night a little above Newtown Creek, returning to the Pawnee, which I had left below the piles off Legaréville.

This morning, having had some of the piles drawn up, I passed through the barrier and went to the place where I had left the two gunboats, in the Pawnee, where I anchored her, and continued on in the Ellen. On rounding a point a little above we came in full sight of the fortification from which the gun had been fired yesterday, when I opened with the Parrott guns of the Ellen, the shell from which just reached, with 20-second fuses and about sixteen degrees elevation. This was immediately returned from their rifle, the shells from which were fired with such accuracy that I think they must have measured the distance. After having received about a dozen fires, and returned them rather more, and having gained as much information of the battery as was important, I returned to the Pawnee, from which vessel I also threw a few shells, and at sunset returned to the neighborhood of Legaréville, intending to send the Unadilla to you in the morning had the Flora not arrived. The contrabands tell us that torpedoes have been laid in the river; but even were this not the case, I hardly think that the gunboats could go beyond where I did to-day without great risk of sticking in the mud. Besides the rifle-gun alluded to, the battery contains a number of smooth-bores, the negroes say seven, the shot from which, however, all fell much short of us, the distance being over two and a half miles, according to Captain Boutelle's measurement, who knows every inch of the ground, having had a surveying station near by. As this battery is on what may be called a different island from that on which the army are to act, I do not see that it can have any bearing on their occupation.

To sum up, we are in as complete possession of the river as of Port Royal, and can land and protect the army whenever it wishes. Beyond the reach of our guns I cannot, of course, be responsible; for it must, to a certain extent, then look out for itself.

We see horsemen everywhere on the watch, but they are becoming a little shy, as we have fired at them several times.

The Flora will take away a number of our contrabands, who are a little in the way at present, although I think the army could find plenty of work for twice as many. The battery I have alluded to is close to Wappoo Cut, but Mr. Hafford, who goes down with this, will point out all the localities.

Captain Marchand went out this morning to join his vessel. There are with me at present the Huron, Unadilla, Pembina, Ottawa, and Helen. The Flora only arrived late this evening as I came down the river; and, as she starts at daylight, I may, in my hurry, not have made myself clear; but, as I said above, Mr. Hafford can explain every thing. The Pembina and Huron are now above Newtown Creek, where I shall leave them.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. DRAYTON, *Commander and Senior Officer at Stono.*

*Flag-Officer S. F. DU PONT,*

*commanding South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, Port Royal.*

The army determined to avail itself of the opportunity thus presented, and the necessary gunboats and transports having been furnished him, General Hunter landed his forces on James Island, and made, as was thought, a permanent lodgment. While General Hunter was absent at Port Royal, an advance was made on the rebel position at Secessionville, which attack was repulsed with severe loss, and soon after James Island was abandoned by our troops, and Charleston remained secure as before. Very little progress was made in the operations against this city until the spring of 1863, when the first serious attack was made. In the mean time the impatience of the country was great, and the Government was hastening its preparations for a decisive blow.

After the triumphant fight of the Monitor with the Merrimack, somewhat extravagant expectations were raised in regard to the powers of the turreted ships; and when the new 15-inch gun was added to this armament, it was believed by many that they could easily pass or destroy any fortifications then known, and therefore it was thought that, by a fleet of Monitors, Charleston could be readily captured. The Government pushed forward to completion, as rapidly as possible, a few small Monitors of about the size of the original one, but armed in part with the 15-inch smooth-bore gun. With these it was expected that

Forts Sumter, and Moultrie, and the other batteries of Charleston, could be passed, and terms dictated to the city with the Monitors lying at its wharves.

In January, 1863, one of the new Monitors, the Montauk, armed with one 11-inch and one 15-inch gun, was sent, under the command of Lieutenant J. L. Worden, to attack Fort McAlister, on the Ogeechee River. The Nashville, a somewhat famous blockade-runner, had gone up Ossabaw Sound and taken refuge under the guns of this fort. It was a strong earth-work, with casemates and bomb-proofs, and mounting nine guns. Some wooden gunboats accompanied the iron-clad, and participated in the fight at a distance. The whole interest of the battle centred, however, upon the Montauk, as about to show, not only the endurance of the new war-ship, but the effect of the big gun. The battle was accordingly fought, with no important result on either side, whereupon the opposers of the Monitors exulted, and denounced them as entirely worthless; and the Navy Department was assailed for having made, as was charged, an enormous waste of public money, with which serviceable vessels might have been built. The advocates of the Monitors felt some degree of mortification. There was very little reason for the feeling manifested on either side. Even 15-inch shot could not demolish a sand-hill; and the Monitor, though struck, was uninjured.

What was really determined was altogether in favor of the iron-clad and the monster gun, for it was shown that the armor of the Monitor could receive, without injury, the fire of the heavy artillery of the fort, and the range and velocity of the 15-inch shot was learned, and found not to be inferior to those of the smaller guns. These two facts were soon used by Lieutenant Worden for an important purpose, as will appear.

While the Government was hastening its preparations for the proposed attack on the city, the rebels were equally busy in constructing works for defence and vessels for attack. During all the early part of the war, and until their resources were cut off by the stringency of the blockade, they made the most strenuous efforts to create an iron-clad navy; and had they not been met by the Monitors and the 15-inch guns, they would have had a fleet of armored vessels quite equal to any broadside ships

which at that time we could have built—a very important fact, the proofs of which will hereafter be given.

On the 31st of January, 1863, two of their iron-clad gunboats came out of Charleston harbor, and made a successful and (to us) mortifying attack upon the blockading squadron. Two of our heaviest men-of-war on that station, the Powhatan and the Canandaigua, were absent at Port Royal, undergoing some repairs, and this was perhaps for them a fortunate circumstance. No one of our own iron-clads seems to have been at that time off the harbor. The vessels on the station were such as had been purchased from the merchant service. The harbor was covered by a thick haze, so that the rebel steamers were enabled to pass out by the main ship-channel unperceived, and were in the midst of the blockaders before they were discovered. They first attacked the *Mercedita*, a steamer of about eight hundred tons. The iron-clad lying low in the water, and being close alongside before it was seen, the guns of the *Mercedita* could not be brought to bear, and a single shell from the rebel disabled her entirely. It passed through her condenser, through her port boiler, and exploding against the port side, tore a hole in her side four or five feet square, leaving the ship not only helpless, but in a sinking condition. The steamer was of course surrendered; but instead of saving the crew, the rebel commander merely parolled them, and passed on to attack the *Keystone State*, a steamer of about fourteen hundred tons burden. This vessel returned the fire of the iron-clad without effect, and was soon set on fire by the explosion of a shell in the forehold. The commander of the *Keystone State*, Le Roy, then determined to run the iron-clad down, and training his guns for a plunging fire, he dashed at his enemy with a speed of twelve knots per hour, but a shell passed through both steam-chests, and she was instantly disabled. During the brief fight she was struck by ten rifle-shells. Other vessels, alarmed by the firing, came up, and the rebel steamers withdrew, having inflicted a very serious damage. On board the *Mercedita* four were killed and three wounded, and on the *Keystone State* the havoc was great. Twenty were killed, and twenty more were wounded, about half the casualties being caused by the escaping steam.

This occurrence was instantly seized upon by the rebel

authorities at Charleston, encouraged thereto by some of the foreign consuls, as a reason for declaring the blockade to be raised by a superior force, and the following proclamation was issued :

HEADQUARTERS NAVAL AND LAND FORCES, }  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA, *January 31, 1863.* }

At about the hour of five o'clock this morning the Confederate States naval forces on this station attacked the United States blockading fleet off the harbor of the city of Charleston, and sunk, dispersed, or drove off and out of sight, for the time, the entire hostile fleet. Therefore, we, the undersigned, commanders, respectively, of the Confederate States naval and land forces in this quarter, hereby formally declare the blockade by the United States of the said city of Charleston, South Carolina, to be raised by a superior force of the Confederate States, from and after this 31st day of January, A. D. 1863.

G. T. BEAUREGARD, *General commanding.*

D. N. INGRAHAM, *com'g Naval Forces in South Carolina.*

Official :

THOMAS JORDAN, *Chief of Staff.*

This was answered by the statement of the officers' commanding the blockading squadron :

U. S. STEAMER NEW IRONSIDES, OFF CHARLESTON, *February 10, 1863.*

We, the undersigned officers, commanding various vessels of the blockading squadron off Charleston, have seen the proclamation of General Beauregard and Commodore Ingraham, herewith appended, as also the results of the so-called engagements, viz. : two vessels sunk, four set on fire, and the remainder driven away ; and also the statement that the British consul and the commander of the British war-steamer Petrel had previously gone five miles beyond the usual anchorage of the blockaders, and could see nothing of them with their glasses.

We deem it our duty to state that the so-called results are *false in every particular*—no vessels were sunk, none were set on fire seriously. Two vessels alone were injured of consequence : the *Mercedita* had her boiler exploded by a shell from the only gun fired at her when surprised by an attack by night—a thick haze was prevailing : and the *Keystone State* also had her steam-chest injured, at the moment of attempting to run down one of the rams. The *Keystone State* was at once assisted by the *Memphis*, which vessel exchanged shots with the iron ram, as

she was withdrawing toward the bar, after having fired at the Keystone State, as did also the Quaker City. So hasty was the retreat of the rams, that, although they might have perceived that the Keystone State had received serious damage, no attempt was ever made to approach her. The Stettin and Ottawa, at the extreme end of the line, did not get under way from their position till after the firing had ceased, and the Stettin merely saw the *black smoke* as the rams disappeared over the bar. The Flag was alongside the Mercedita after, it seems, she had yielded to the ram, supposing herself sinking. The rams withdrew hastily toward the harbor, and on their way were fired at by the Housatonic and Augusta, until both had got beyond reach of their guns. They anchored under the protection of their forts, and remained there.

No vessel, *iron-clad or other*, passed out over the bar after the return of the rams in-shore. The Unadilla was not aware of the attack until the Housatonic commenced firing, when she moved out toward that vessel from her anchorage.

The Housatonic was never *beyond the usual line of the blockade*. The Quaker City, in the forenoon, picked up her anchor, which she had slipped to repair to the point of the firing. The Flag communicated with the senior officer on board the Housatonic that forenoon, soon after the firing ended, and the blockade continued as before. No vessel ran in or out of the port that day, *nor was any attempt made to run the blockade*. The Keystone State necessarily was ordered to Port Royal for repairs. The Unadilla returned to her usual anchorage after communicating with the senior officer, where she remained during the day. *Throughout the day two small tug-boats* remained apparently in attendance on the ram, under cover of Forts Moultrie and Beauregard. The prize steamer Princess Royal, which had been lying alongside of the Housatonic, was dispatched to Port Royal by order of the senior officer, *one hour and a half after the ram had retired to the cover of the batteries* and the firing had ceased, or about 9.30 A. M.

These are the facts, and we do not hesitate to state that no vessel did come out beyond the bar after the return of the rams, at between 7 and 8 A. M., to the cover of the forts. We believe the statement that any vessel came anywhere near the usual anchorage of any of the blockaders, *or up to the bar*, after the withdrawal of the rams, to be deliberately and knowingly false.

If the statement from the papers, as now before us, has the sanction of the captain of the Petrel and the foreign consuls, we can only deplore that foreign officers can lend their official positions to the spreading

before the world, for unworthy objects, *untruths*, patent to every officer of this squadron.

WM. ROGERS TAYLOR, *Capt., com'g U. S. Steamer Housatonic.*

J. H. STRONG, *Com'r, com'g U. S. Steamer Flag.*

JAS. MADISON FRAILEY, *Com'r, com'g U. S. Steamer Quaker City.*

E. G. PARROTT, *Com'r, com'g U. S. Steamer Augusta.*

PEND. G. WATMOUGH, *com'g U. S. Steamer Memphis.*

C. J. VAN ALSTINE, *com'g U. S. Steamer Stettin.*

On the 30th of January another disaster occurred, by which one of the blockading steamers was captured—the Isaac Smith. As before stated, Stono Inlet had been taken possession of by the gunboats, in order to obtain a base on James Island for the troops under General Hunter. After James Island was evacuated by the army, two gunboats were left in the Stono to watch it and the adjacent channels. One of these, the Isaac Smith, was sent up the river to reconnoitre, and fell into an ambush which the rebels had very skilfully prepared. They had learned from a deserter from the vessel, that her machinery was very much exposed, and they brought, in the night, some heavy guns and several field-pieces, and planted them, within short range of the narrow channel, behind clumps of trees and bushes, by which they were completely concealed. Thus prepared, they watched and waited until the Smith should pass up. When, at length, she was sent on her unfortunate mission, they permitted her to go above the main batteries before opening their fire. The Smith proceeded up the river and anchored. Soon after, she was fired upon, first by a battery on James Island, and immediately after by other batteries below her. There were, in all, about thirty guns. Her commander, Lieutenant S. F. Conover, saw at once that he was trapped, but determined to defend his vessel, which he did bravely until his engine was completely disabled, when he was compelled to surrender. He had eight killed and sixteen wounded. The Smith had frequently gone up the river before without being attacked, and no guns or signs of an enemy could at this time be seen by her lookouts. The trap was very adroitly set.

On the 1st of February the Montauk Monitor, still under the command of Lieutenant John L. Worden, in company with four



wooden gunboats, made another attack on Fort McAllister. The gunboats lay about one mile and three-quarters from the fort, while the Monitor anchored at a distance of only six hundred yards, where she engaged the fort for an hour, and was then, on account of the falling of the tide, obliged to drop down to a distance of one thousand four hundred yards, where she continued the fight three hours longer. The parapets of the work were torn up by the shells, but as they were only sand-banks, little harm was done. The iron-clad was struck forty-six times, but no material damage was done, and no one on board of her was injured. The endurance and safety of the Monitor vessels was again shown, and the confidence of the Department in them was increased.

The Nashville was a very fine and fast English blockade-runner, and having got into Ossabaw Sound was unable to get out again. Having taken in a cargo of cotton, she lay for several months, watching in vain for a chance to go to sea. She at length (the idea of getting out with her cotton having been given up) withdrew up the Ogeechee, and, after a time, reappeared fitted up as a privateer, and presenting a very fine appearance. Had she been able to go out, she would probably have rivalled the Alabama in destroying our merchant-ships. She lay, usually, close under the guns of McAllister, and, in order to protect her, this fort was strengthened, the river was staked, and a line of torpedoes placed in front to prevent gunboats from ascending to cut her out. On the 27th of February Lieutenant Worden observed the Nashville in motion above Fort McAllister. A reconnoissance made at once showed that in attempting to run up the river she had grounded a short distance above the fort. Worden immediately decided to attempt to destroy her where she lay.

At daylight on the morning of the 28th of February, Lieutenant Worden moved up the Montauk, accompanied by several gunboats. Fort McAllister is placed at a sharp bend in the river, and the Nashville being above the fort, a neck of low marshy land lay between her and the point to which the Monitor could approach from below. It was necessary for the Monitor, therefore, in order to reach the Nashville with her shells, to go close up to the obstructions below the fort, lie there, under

the guns of the batteries, and fire across the marsh. This was done. The Montauk took her position near the line of obstructions, and paying no attention to the guns of the fort, opened fire on the rebel steamer at the distance of about three-quarters of a mile. The exact range was soon obtained, and in less than twenty minutes she was struck by both 15-inch and 11-inch shells, and was on fire in several places. A large pivot-gun, mounted abaft her foremast, exploded from the heat, then her smoke-stack fell; soon after her magazine exploded, and the career of the famous blockade-runner was over, and our commerce was saved from the depredations of a very dangerous privateer. The Monitor was struck five times, but received no serious injury. Protected, as the Nashville was, by the guns of the fort, she could not have been destroyed except by an iron-clad, nor could a heavy broadside-ship have been manœuvred in the river, nor would even the New Ironsides have been safe under the fire of the rebel guns in the position occupied by the Montauk. The endurance of the Monitor under fire, and the power of the 15-inch gun, were thus once more satisfactorily tested, and a dangerous enemy was destroyed.

Early in March several other iron-clads having arrived, Admiral Du Pont ordered them to attack Fort McAllister, although, as he stated in his report to the Secretary, the capture of that fort "was of no special practical importance, except it might possibly shelter another blockade-runner." He wished, as he stated, "to subject the various mechanical appliances of the iron-clads to the full test of active service, and to give the advantage of target-practice to the officers and men with their new ordnance." In pursuance of this design, the Monitors were exposed for eight hours to the fire of heavy guns and mortars from a fort whose capture, even were it possible, was of no practical importance, in a narrow channel, where the Monitors were constantly liable to be grounded, and consequently to an exposure of the hull below the side-armor. This fort was armed with 10-inch and 8-inch guns, one 100-pounder rifle, and some smaller rifles throwing bolts. Besides these, there were some 10-inch mortars. To subject the Monitors for eight hours to the fire of such a battery in a narrow, dangerous channel, merely for target-practice, and with no expectation of any important practical

result, even had the fort been captured, was a somewhat novel proceeding, and perhaps may throw some light upon the subsequent attack on Charleston. The following extract from Captain Percival Drayton, the commander of the *Passaic*, will show the character of the fort :

The fort is very solidly built, with high traverses between the guns, and raised at least twenty feet above the river, and contained seven guns and an 11-inch mortar. One of these guns was, I think, destroyed ; the others used until we were out of range. Immense holes were cut in the earth, the traverses and face much cut away, but still no injury done which I think a good night's work would not repair, and I do not believe that it can be made untenable by any number of iron-clads which the shallow water and narrow channel will permit to be brought in position against it. The guns are one 10-inch, a shot from which lodged on the top of our turret ; one heavy rifle, about a 100-pounder ; and the remainder, I should judge, thirty-two's, with a light gun throwing bolts, which would be aimed at any one showing themselves on the deck. These, with the mortar, were, however, nothing as a defence to the river comparable to the shallow water and piles, as was proved by my being exposed to their fire for eight hours without serious injury ; but they answer the purpose, which is simply to prevent the channel being cleared of obstruction. Our three mortar-schooners kept up a fire during the day from about four thousand yards distance, but, so far as I could observe, without the least effect, the shells generally falling short. •

The report of Lieutenant J. N. Miller shows the injuries received by the *Passaic* in this experimental target-firing for testing her machinery and new ordnance, before going into an *actual serious fight* :

UNITED STATES IRON-CLAD STEAMER PASSAIC, }  
OGRECHEE RIVER, GEORGIA, March 4, 1863. }

SIR : I submit the following report of the injuries we received in the attack on Fort McAllister :

We were struck nine times on the port side-armor. Three of these were about fifty feet from the bow, and within the distance of three feet from each other. They made indentations of two inches, carried away several bolts, and raised the adjoining deck-plating one inch. The other shots in side-armor made indentations of about one inch, without injuring the bolts.

On deck-plating we received thirteen shots. One over ward-room store-room raised the plating and carried away several of the bolts. One struck over the hammock-room, near the turret, crushing in the plating and deck-planking, causing the deck to leak when covered with water. Two shots struck over the engine-room, breaking a number of bolts in the plating, which it also broke through and raised the ends. A 10-inch mortar-shell, loaded with sand, struck over the bread-room, crushing in the deck-plating and planking. It struck partly on a beam and the angle-iron which supports it, but, as far as we can see, these are not injured. The remaining shots on deck did not seriously injure the plating.

Five shots struck the turret, making indentations varying from one-half inch to one inch. One of these is six inches below the 15-inch port.

Two shots struck the pilot-house, carrying away three of the bolts, and making indentations of about one inch.

One shot struck the roof of the turret and broke one of its beams of railroad-iron. The lower part of the smoke-stack was struck once close to the deck, making an indentation of one and one-fourth inch, and carrying away one of the bolt-heads.

The concussion of the 15-inch gun broke all of the bolts holding the side of the box to the turret, and, I have no doubt, unless the bolts are replaced, that a few more fires would destroy the box, one side of which is much bulged out. The bolt holding one of the rollers of the sliding-plate, in concussion-box, parted during the action; but, as we always fired at the same elevation, the plate was lashed so that we could run the gun in and out.

During the action we were struck thirty-four times, nine of which were on side-armor, thirteen on deck, five on turret, two on pilot-house, one on roof of turret, one on smoke-stack; one carried away pennant-staff on pilot-house; one carried away boat-spar aft, and one the out-rigger forward.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,  
J. N. MILLER, *Executive Officer.*

The shots of the rebels were principally aimed at the Passaic, the leading vessel.



## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### FIRST ATTACK ON CHARLESTON, APRIL 7, 1863.

THE situation of Charleston is too well known to require an elaborate description. Its position resembles somewhat that of New York, on a neck of land between two broad rivers, the Cooper and the Ashley, and by the junction of these two rivers and the connected bay is formed the excellent harbor. Before the war the seaward entrance was defended only by Fort Moultrie, on Sullivan's Island, and Fort Sumter, erected at great expense by our Government, upon an artificial foundation. The bar is crossed by four different channels, which unite in one between the guns of Sumter and Moultrie, where it is about one mile in breadth. After the attack upon Fort Sumter by the rebels, by which the war was opened, the defences of the harbor were rapidly increased, under the supervision of scientific engineers, until it became one of the strongest places in the world, not by means of masses of masonry, but by skilfully-constructed and well-located earthworks, armed with the heaviest guns then known, both rifled and smooth-bore.

An enemy coming in from sea would have to pass between Sullivan's Island on the north and Morris Island on the south, both of which were lined with forts and batteries, including Moultrie and Wagner; while just beyond Moultrie, and close to the left side of the channel, going in, stood the formidable Sumter. Beyond Sumter, and protecting the inner harbor, were rope and frame and pile obstructions, countless torpedoes, forts and batteries at every available spot, and several iron-clad vessels, in addition to the other means of defence.

The accompanying map, which presents with great accuracy

and minuteness the defences and obstructions of the harbor as they were when the city was captured, will give a clearer idea of their character than the most minute description. There are no accessible data from which to ascertain the exact condition of these works on the day when Admiral Du Pont made his attack, but some light is thrown upon the subject by the statements of official rebel documents. The following circular, issued December 26, 1862, sets forth clearly the plan of defence adopted, and what results were expected from the fire of the forts and batteries:

## CIRCULAR.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST MILITARY DISTRICT, S. C., GEORGIA, AND FLORIDA, }  
CHARLESTON, *December 26, 1862.* }

In case the proposed attack upon this harbor is known beforehand, special directions will be given for the service of the different batteries. As, however, it may happen that a surprise may be attempted, or that the intervening time between the knowledge of the intention and the event may be too short, the instructions hereinafter contained will be carefully attended to.

Each commanding officer of a fort or battery will give his attention immediately to the strengthening of his carriages, and the complete preparation of his material. Besides making the proper requisitions on the staff departments, let him endeavor to do as much as possible from his own resources. While staff departments are, to a great extent, crippled, for want of material and workmen, much can be accomplished by ready expedients without their aid. Every carriage must be kept carefully screwed up, and, if any defects, made at least temporarily efficient. All the elevating screws, eccentric wheels, and traversing gear, must be put in order, and kept so, and especial care must be taken to see that a full supply of small implements is constantly on hand.

Ammunition should be examined, and immediately apportioned to the several guns, reference being had to the orders heretofore given on that subject; but where the quantity is not sufficient, the greater portion should be given to the heavier guns, as on them principally the success of the defence must depend.

Officers and men of each command must be kept on the alert, and instructions to go to each battery at once, upon an alarm; and especial care must be taken that each battery is in readiness for instant action, as the men arrive at their guns.

It is hoped and believed that most of these things are habitually at-

tended to; but as constant vigilance is our only security, they cannot be too forcibly insisted upon.

Upon observing a disposition to attack on the part of the enemy, the nearest fort or battery will give the alarm. By day a shotted gun, and dipping the flag, will communicate the danger to the other fortifications and headquarters. All commands will go at once to battery, and the circumstances of the alarm communicated to the headquarters by telegraph or signal.

By night a shotted gun and a rocket will give the intelligence.

In whatever way the attack is made by the enemy, he is to be engaged as soon as possible; to do so effectually, with a few long-range guns from every fort that will bear. The number of the guns must be left to the discretion of the commanding officer, who must see that the fire is as accurate as possible. They must not engage too great a number, and be careful not unduly to excite their men, or strain their guns and carriages. While the long-range fire is valuable, if accurate, to annoy the enemy, and force him to develop his attack, it is not to be depended on for more. Other things being equal, it will be well that the guns to leeward are first engaged. The remaining guns of the batteries will be trained by battery on different points where the enemy must pass, care being taken to have the fire of each battery concentrated. As the enemy approaches, let the distance he will be in passing be accurately estimated by the distance-buoys, and the elevation made to correspond, making it too little rather than too great for direct fire. If the vessels are passing rapidly, the guns should be discharged by battery, just as the prows of the vessels come across the line of sight.

In the case of wooden vessels, the object will be to hit them near the water line, just abaft the smoke-stack. In the case of iron-clad vessels, to hit the deck or turrets at the intersection with the deck, and especially to let all the shots strike at once.

The first fire will be concentrated upon the leading vessels, and will be continued upon them as long as the guns by battery will bear well, and especially if they become entangled in obstructions, even if certain vessels engage to draw off the attention of the outermost batteries, and remain behind.

Should some of the vessels succeed in passing, the action must then pass into the hands of commanding officers of batteries. They will pour in their fire as far as practicable by battery, and as fast as it can be done with accuracy, on whatever vessels of the enemy may be nearest them.

The guns of Beauregard Battery, Fort Moultrie, Battery Bee, and the eastern, northeastern, and northwestern faces of Fort Sumter, will be



used to form the first circle of fire to which the enemy must be subjected; the centre being a little to the eastward of a line between the forts and midway. Every effort must be made to crush his vessels and repel his attack within this circle, and especially while he is entangled in the obstructions.

All the mortars of Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie will be trained on the centre above indicated. The fuses will be of the full length, and the shells have large bursting charges; it being better to have the fuses fail than the shells to burst in the air, and the full effect of the explosions being desirable if successful. The mortar-batteries will be fired by battery when the enemy's vessels are about two ships' lengths from the point on which they are trained.

If the fleet is large, the mortars will be kept trained on the same point, and fired by battery as rapidly as possible while the fleet is passing. If small, and a portion has passed the first circle of fire, the mortars of Fort Sumter will be trained to operate on the second circle, the centre of which will be at a point about midway between Forts Sumter and Ripley, and to the southward of the middle-ground shoal. It will be formed by the heavy guns of Fort Johnston, Fort Ripley, Castle Pinckney, Battery Bee, the northwestern and western faces of Fort Sumter.

The guns of Forts Johnston and Ripley and Castle Pinckney will open on the leading vessels as they come within easy range, care being taken that every shot finds its mark. Those of Fort Sumter and Battery Bee will continue upon the leading vessels as long as they are close, but if they elongate their distance, the fire will be concentrated on the vessels nearest them.

Should any vessel succeed in passing the second circle of fire, the third will be formed and put into action by the guns of White Point Battery and Battery Glover, with such guns of Forts Johnston and Ripley and Castle Pinckney as will bear. Concentration on the leading vessels will be the object, as before.

During the action care will be taken, as far as possible, to prevent the chances of shot from the batteries taking the direction of our own works. The best way of doing this will be to let none miss the enemy, and when he is between the works most especial accuracy will be striven for.

The vessels of the Confederate navy will engage during the action, and they may often pass our batteries. In this case, officers and gunners cannot be too careful to avoid hitting them. The fire by battery, as a general thing, will be discontinued at those vessels of the enemy which our ships engage closely; but if occasion offers, endeavors will be

made to hit the ports of the revolving turrets on the enemy's vessels when turned from our ships, to disarrange and throw out of gear the machinery for closing the ports.

Accurate fire by single guns will be concentrated on the enemy's vessels, if two or more attack one of ours; and should the distance admit, then it will be advisable to pour upon one of them a heavy fire by battery.

The plunging fire from Fort Sumter is expected to be particularly effective, and when single rifled guns are fired from the barbettes of that fort, it will be well to hit the grated roofs of the turrets with square-headed bolts, followed by shells filled with molten iron.

The square-headed bolts for the 10-inch columbiads and the heavier guns will be fired by battery when the enemy is within close range. Solid shot and bolts will be used generally against iron-clads during the action.

The furnaces for melting iron and heating shot will be kept in heat, and heated projectiles will be used whenever occasion offers advantage.

Should it happen that any of the enemy's vessels become disabled and endeavor to get out of fire, the outermost batteries must pay particular attention to prevent them, and in case other of the enemy's ships come to the assistance of the disabled, let every gun and mortar which will bear be turned upon them by battery.

The great object of the enemy will probably be to run by, and every effort must be made to crush him in each successive circle of fire which he encounters.

Hog Island Channel will be obstructed, and the obstructions must be guarded by the long-range guns of Fort Sumter and the columbiads of Battery Bee nearest it.

It is doubtful whether the enemy will attempt to pass by Folly Channel. If he does, a circle of fire will be formed by the guns of Fort Ripley, Castle Pinckney, and White Point Battery.

The position of torpedoes will be communicated to commanding officers; and the effort made to drive the enemy's vessels upon them if he is taking other courses.

The obstructions will also be designated, and under no circumstances will the enemy be permitted to reconnoitre them.

The headquarters of the undersigned will be at Fort Sumter, and directions will be sent by telegraph and signal to different posts, should any thing require special directions.

Batteries Marshall and Wagner will be worked to the extent of their capacity for injuring the enemy, by their commanding officers, without unduly exposing their commands.

The directions given above relate, generally, to the defeat of an attack by the enemy's fleet alone. Should a combined attack be made by land and water, other orders can be issued, as nothing of that kind can be done by surprise.

The present circular will be studied and reflected upon by all officers who will be engaged in this honorable duty of the coming defence. With careful attention, coolness, and skilful gunnery, success is far more than probable.

(Signed) R. S. RIPLEY, *Brigadier-General commanding.*

Official: WM. F. NANEY, *A. A. General.*

It appears that a new projectile for smooth-bores was here employed, by what particular device is not stated. It was a square-headed bolt for the 10-inch columbiads and the heavier guns. Such were the defences of Charleston when the first attack was made and with the following force: the New Ironsides, carrying sixteen 11-inch Dahlgrens and a heavy rifle; the Monitors Passaic, Weehawken, Montauk, Patapsco, Catskill, Nan-tucket, and Nahant; and the Keokuk, a Monitor-shaped ship, but not an Ericsson Monitor. The Monitors were all of one class, eight hundred and forty-four tons burden, and armed with 15-inch and 11-inch guns. One of them, however, mounted a heavy rifle instead of an 11-inch gun.

The Keokuk was a little less than seven hundred tons burden, carried two 11-inch guns, and was more lightly armored and on a different principle from the Monitors proper. In all, these vessels mounted a little more than thirty guns, to meet some of the most formidable fortifications in the world. It was to be a new experiment in war, and by its result very important questions were to be determined in regard to the new ordnance and the new American form of war-ship.

In order to understand more clearly the terrible severity of the fire to which these vessels were to be exposed, it is necessary to consider some statements in the circular of Brigadier-General Ripley, already quoted. He mentions three circles of fire which had been prepared for the reception of the fleet. He meant that there were three points, one beyond the other, in passing up the harbor, upon which circles of batteries could concentrate their fire, as upon a focus, and to these points the ranges of the

guns had been accurately adjusted by experimental firing, and the points were marked by guides, buoys, and obstructions, so that no shot could well miss its mark.

The first focus of fire into which the fleet would come was formed between Sumter and Moultrie. Three obstructions of various kinds were placed in and across the channel, through which it was thought the fleet could not pass, and where the leading vessels being stopped, the line would be thrown into confusion, and the Monitors would be huddled together and could be crushed by the concentrated fire of a circle of forts and batteries. According to the rebel accounts, seventy-six guns bore upon this single point, while our own officers placed the number at one hundred. If, now, it is considered that bearing upon this spot were 7-inch and 8-inch Brooke and Blakely rifles, 10-inch columbiads for which had been prepared square-headed bolts, much heavier than the ordinary shot, and guns for hot shot and for shells, containing molten iron, an idea may be formed of what these iron-clads were to meet. These guns, moreover, had been so tried that there could be no random shooting. The rebel plan of defence lacked nothing which skill, experience, and science could suggest.

In the face of such formidable preparations for the destruction of his squadron, Du Pont moved up his novel war-ships to the attack in the afternoon of the 7th of April, 1863. As Admiral Du Pont and his chief officers were in some quarters censured for their failure in this battle, and as it was the cause of more heated discussion than any other action, and as new and exceedingly important questions were involved in the issue, the whole subject demands from the historian more than ordinary consideration. A mere description of the fight, however graphic, correct, and minute, is not what is required in this case, but a statement of facts, and a setting forth of the proper conclusions. In order to do this, it is necessary that Admiral Du Pont and his officers should be permitted to present for themselves the reasons by which they were influenced, the character of the fight, and the extent of damages as they appeared to them. For this purpose the following statements are presented—extracts from various reports—which are made as brief as possible.

## ACCOUNT OF ADMIRAL DU PONT.

On the following day, April 7th, at noon, this being the earliest hour at which, owing to the state of the tide, the pilots would consent to move, I made signal to the vessels to weigh anchor, having previously ordered them not to reply to the batteries on Morris Island, but reserve their fire until they could pass Fort Sumter, in case there were no obstructions, and attack the northwest face. The chain of the Weehawken, the leading vessel, had, however, become entangled in the grapnels of the pioneer raft, and the vessels were delayed in moving until about fifteen minutes past one, when every thing being clear, the Weehawken moved on, followed by the Passaic and others in the regular order of battle.

On the way up the leading vessel passed a number of buoys strewed about in every direction, causing a suspicion of torpedoes, one of which burst near the Weehawken, without, however, producing any serious injury.

At 2.10 the Weehawken, the leading vessel, signalled obstructions in her vicinity, and soon after approached very close to them. They extended across the harbor from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter, and were marked by rows of casks very near together, and in several lines. Beyond these, again, piles were seen extending from James Island to the middle ground.

At 2.50 the guns of Fort Moultrie opened upon the Weehawken, followed shortly after by all the batteries on Sullivan's Island, Morris Island, and Fort Sumter.

Not being able to pass the obstructions, the Weehawken, and, successively, the Passaic, Nahant, and others, were obliged to turn, which threw the line into some confusion as the other vessels approached. This was particularly the case with the flag-ship, which became, in a measure, entangled with the Monitors, and could not bring her battery to bear upon Fort Sumter without great risk of firing into them. She was obliged on her way up to anchor twice, to prevent her from going ashore, and on one of these occasions in consequence of having come into collision with two of the iron-clads.

The Monitors and the Keokuk were able to get within easy range of Fort Sumter at distances varying from 550 to 800 yards, in which positions they were subjected, successively, to a tremendous concentrated fire from all the batteries on Sullivan's Island, Morris Island, Sumter, and others of the most formidable kind, and from guns of the heaviest calibre.

Not being able to place the *New Ironsides* where I desired, though she was within a distance of 1,000 yards, and evening approaching, at 4.30 I made signal to withdraw from action, intending to resume the attack the next morning.

During the evening the commanding officers of the iron-clads came on board the flag-ship, and, to my regret, I soon became convinced of the utter impracticability of taking the city of Charleston by the force under my command.

No ship had been exposed to the severest fire of the enemy over forty minutes, and yet in that brief period, as the Department will perceive by the detailed reports of the commanding officers, five of the iron-clads were wholly or partially disabled; disabled, too (as the obstructions could not be passed), in that which was most essential to our success—I mean in their armament, or power of inflicting injury by their guns.

Commander Rhind, in the *Keokuk*, had only been able to fire three times during the short period he was exposed to the guns of the enemy, and was obliged to withdraw from action to prevent his vessel from sinking, which event occurred on the following morning.

The *Nahant*, Commander Downes, was most seriously damaged, her turret being so jammed as effectually to prevent its turning; many of the bolts of both turret and pilot-house were broken, and the latter became nearly untenable in consequence of the nuts and ends flying across it.

Captain P. Drayton, in the *Passaic*, after the fourth fire from her 11-inch gun, was unable to use it again during the action; and his turret also became jammed, though he was, after some delay, enabled to get it in motion again.

Commander Ammen, of the *Patapsco*, lost the use of his rifled gun after the fifth fire, owing to the carrying away of the forward cap square bolts. On the *Nantucket*, Commander Fairfax reports that after the third shot from the 15-inch gun, the port stopper became jammed, several shot striking very near the port and driving in the plates, preventing the further use of that gun during the action.

The other iron-clads, though struck many times severely, were still able to use their guns, but I am convinced that, in all probability, in another thirty minutes they would have been likewise disabled.

In the detailed reports herewith forwarded, from the commanding officers of all the vessels engaged, excepting that of the *New Ironsides*, not yet received (respectively marked Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9), the Department will be fully informed of the character and extent of the

injuries received by these vessels, and to which I have only partially referred.

I also forward herewith a statement in tabular form (marked No. 10), drawn up by the ordnance officer, Lieutenant Mackenzie, by which, among other things, it appears that only one hundred and thirty-nine shot and shell were fired by our vessels, though during that same period the enemy poured upon us an incessant storm of round shot and shell, rifled projectiles of all descriptions, and red-hot shot.

Any attempt to pass through the obstructions I have referred to would have entangled the vessels, and held them under the most severe fire of heavy ordnance that has ever been delivered; and while it is barely possible that some vessels might have forced their way through, it would only have been to be again impeded by fresh and more formidable obstructions, and to encounter other powerful batteries, with which the whole harbor of Charleston has been lined.

I had hoped that the endurance of the iron-clads would have enabled them to have borne any weight of fire to which they might have been exposed; but when I found that so large a portion of them were wholly or one-half disabled, by less than an hour's engagement, before attempting to remove (overcome) the obstructions, or testing the power of the torpedoes, I was convinced that persistence in the attack would only result in the loss of the greater portion of the iron-clad fleet, and in leaving many of them inside the harbor, to fall into the hands of the enemy.

The slowness of our fire, and our inability to occupy any battery that we might silence, or to prevent its being restored under cover of night, were difficulties of the gravest character, and until the outer forts should have been taken, the army could not enter the harbor or afford me any assistance.

The Passaic was more severely injured than any other Monitor in the fight, and the account of her commander, Captain Percival Drayton, will be found especially interesting. He was an officer of very high standing, and his death, soon after the close of the war, was greatly lamented wherever he was known:

U. S. IRON-CLAD PASSAIC, OFF MORRIS ISLAND, S. C., *April 8, 1863.*

In obedience to your signal, I yesterday at 12.30 got under way, prepared to follow the Weehawken, which vessel had on the bow a raft projection for catching torpedoes. This, however, pulling her anchor and causing some delay, I at 12.40 signalled for permission to go ahead. The Weehawken, however, having at length cleared her anchor, pro-









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THE "PURITAN."



ceeded at 1.15 toward Charleston, followed by this vessel. On the way up a number of buoys of various descriptions were passed, strewed about in every direction, and causing suspicion of torpedoes, one of which machines we saw burst under the bow of the Weehawken. At 2.50 Fort Moultrie and the batteries on Sullivan's Island opened, to which I replied with the 11-inch in passing, and pushed on for Sumter, whose guns began almost immediately to fire, and were at once answered by my two. When opposite the centre of the fort, we came pretty close to some obstructions which seemed to extend the whole way from Fort Moultrie across; here I stopped as the Weehawken had just done before. At the fourth shot from 11-inch gun, I was struck in quick succession in the lower part of the turret by two heavy shot, which bulged in its plates and beams, and, forcing together the rails on which the 11-inch carriage worked, rendered it wholly useless for the remainder of the action, several hours being necessary to put it again in working order. Soon after it was discovered that there was something the matter with the turret itself, which could not be moved, and on examination it was found that a part of the brass ring underneath it had been broken off, and, being forced inboard, had jammed; on clearing this, the turret could again be moved, but for some time irregularly.

A little after, a very heavy rifle shot struck the upper edge of the turret, broke all of its eleven plates, and then glancing upward took the pilot-house, yet with such force as to make an indentation of two and a half inches, extending nearly the whole length of the shot. The blow was so severe as to considerably mash in the pilot-house, bend it over, open the plates and squeeze out the top, so that on one side it was lifted up three inches above the top on which it rested, exposing the inside of the pilot-house, and rendering it likely that the next shot would take off the top itself entirely.

At 4.10, being desirous of more carefully examining into the injuries to the gun-carriage and turret, as the engineer thought one of the braces which supports the latter was broken, and also to see what was the external injury to the pilot-house, and whether it was possible to get the top into place, and not being able to do this in the crowd of vessels which were all around and under so fierce a fire, I dropped a little below Fort Moultrie and anchored, having signalled for your permission, which was not, I think, seen, however.

I soon satisfied myself that there was nothing to be done either to the pilot-house or 11-inch gun; and the injury to the turret not proving very serious, I was just about returning to the upper fort, when you made signal to follow your motions, and very soon after, at 4.30, to retire from

action. At 5 I got under way and followed the Ironsides to my present anchorage.

The only really serious injuries were the ones mentioned above, although the vessel was struck thirty-five times, as follows: outside armor, fifteen times, which had been too rough to examine; deck, five times, once very badly; turret, ten times; pilot-house, twice; smoke-pipe, once; flag-staff over turret shot away, and boat shattered.

There was a little motion, and in consequence some of the outside shots were low down. Several bolt-heads were knocked off and thrown into the pilot-house and turret, and the former might have done serious injury to those inside, had they not been stopped by a sheet-iron lining which I had placed there while at Port Royal.

Owing to the delays caused by the various accidents ending in the entire disabling of one gun, I was only able to fire four times from the 11-inch, and nine from the 15-inch gun. There was some loss of time also, from the necessity of using the sectional rammer, as the fire was all around and required the ports to be kept closed.

On account of the dense smoke I was not able to see the effect of my own shots, but, except a few scars, I could not perceive either yesterday or this morning, when I had a very good view of its lower face, that the fort was in the least injured, and am satisfied that our limited number of guns, with their slow fire and liability to get out of order, were no match for the hundreds which were concentrated on them, at distances perhaps scarcely anywhere beyond a half mile, and nearly as well protected against injury from shot as were ours.

I could see several ranges of piles running nearly across the upper harbor, the first line having a narrow opening, just beyond which were the enemy's steamers, three of them apparently iron-clads.

I was more than usually incommoded by smoke during the action, owing, no doubt, to the difficulty of keeping the blower-bands in working order, with such an amount of water as has been for days pouring over them through the lower part of the turret—a most serious evil, and which I think calls for a remedy, if the turret is to be kept up in any but the smoothest water.

My experience at Fort McAllister satisfied me that the decks were not strong enough; and this of Fort Sumter, that the pilot-house is not capable of withstanding heavy shot for any length of time, and even throws a doubt on the turret itself, or at least its machinery.

The fire to which we were subjected was as fierce, I suspect, as vessels are often exposed to; and one of my officers, who was below, tells me that at one time, in a few seconds, he counted fifteen shots which

passed over his head just above the deck, and at times the whistling was so rapid he could not keep count at all.

This certainly shows how much battering our iron-clads escaped by being so low on the water. You probably observed yourself, in the Ironsides, the great difficulty of managing these vessels and keeping them clear of each other and the bottom, with the limited power of vision which the holes in the pilot-house afford; and when to this is added the smoke, I consider it a piece of great good luck that none of us got ashore, or received injury from collision. . . . .

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. DRAYTON, *Captain.*

*Rear-Admiral S. F. Du Pont,*

*commanding S. A. B. Squadron, Flag-ship Ironsides.*

The following is an extract from the account of Captain John Rodgers, of the Weehawken :

The accuracy of the shooting on the part of the rebels was very great, having been obtained, no doubt, by practice at range targets, since I remarked that, as we passed a buoy, all the guns opened at once. The missiles were very formidable, being, I infer from their marks, bolts, balls, rifled shell, and steel-pointed shot. More than one hundred guns, I think, fired upon us at once, with great rapidity, and mostly at short range. My counted shot-marks are fifty-three; some, I presume, have escaped attention.

Two or three heavy shot struck the side armor near the same place. They have so broken the iron that it only remains in splintered fragments upon that spot; much of it can be picked off by hand, and the wood is exposed.

The deck was pierced so as to make a hole, through which water ran into the vessel; but it was not large. Thirty-six bolts were broken in the turret, and a good many in the pilot-house; but as these are concealed by an iron lining, I have no means of knowing how many.

At one time the turret revolved with difficulty in consequence of a shot upon its junction with the pilot-house, but it worked well again after a few turns had been made with higher steam. The guns and carriages performed well. At 5 o'clock, in obedience to signal, withdrew from the range of fire and anchored. From the nature of the attack the vessels were alternately under the hottest fire, and no one, I presume, may be said to have had it very severe for more than forty minutes.

We approached very close to the obstructions extending from Fort

Sumter to Fort Moultrie—as near, indeed, as I could get without running upon them. They were marked by rows of casks very near together. To the eye they appeared almost to touch one another, and there was more than one line of them. To me they appeared thus:

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  □  □  □  □  □  □  □  □
    □  □  □  □  □  □

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The appearance was so formidable that, upon deliberate judgment, I thought it right not to entangle the vessel in obstructions which I did not think we could have passed through, and in which we should have been caught. Beyond these, piles were seen between Castle Pinckney and the middle ground.

A torpedo exploded under us, or very near to us; it lifted the vessel a little, but I am unable to perceive that it has done us any damage. I have no accident to report.

The raft which we had attached to our bow did not much impede our steering, but while lying at anchor the waves converted it into a huge battering-ram. In two days it had started the armor upon our bow. No vessel can carry it except in smooth water. Its motions did not correspond to the movements of the Weehawken. Sometimes, when she rose to the sea the raft fell, and the reverse. Thus we were threatened with having it on our decks or under the overhang. No prudent man would carry the torpedo attached to the raft in a fleet; an accidental collision would blow up his own friend, and he would be more dreaded than an enemy.

After narrating briefly the main facts as they came under his observation, Lieutenant Worden adds:

After testing the weight of the enemy's fire, and observing the obstructions, I am led to believe that Charleston cannot be taken by the naval force now present, and that, had the attack been continued, it could not have failed to result in disaster.

The following is an extract from Commander Daniel Ammen's account:

Forty-seven projectiles of the enemy struck the vessel. No damage was done which disabled her, although injuries were received which, multiplied, would do so. Forty bolts of the smoke-stack were broken, and a chain around it will be necessary to its continued security.

The officers and crew acquitted themselves as usual. I am indebted to Acting-Master Vaughan, transferred temporarily to this vessel, for valuable aid in avoiding collisions, as it is out of the question for one person to observe properly from the various light-holes. I think a want of vision one of the most serious defects of this class, making it impossible to fight them advantageously, to avoid dangers, or to make a satisfactory reconnoissance.

Commander D. McN. Fairfax has in his report the following:

I must say that I am disappointed beyond measure at this experiment of Monitors overcoming strong forts. It was a fair trial.

Commander John Downes, of the Nahant, made an extended report, from which the following extract is taken:

At this time the squadron commenced retiring from action, in compliance with signal, and we permanently withdrew, having been about forty minutes in close action, during which we were struck thirty-six times heavily, had one man fatally, two severely, and four slightly injured, all by flying bolts and iron inside of turret and pilot-house; and we received the following injuries to the vessel and fittings, besides those already enumerated, the plates on side-armor broken badly in several places, and in one, where struck by two shot in close proximity, partly stripped from the wood and the wood backing broken in, with edging of deck-plates started up and rolled back in places. On port quarter, side-armor deeply indented, and started from side and extremity of stern. The deck is struck twice damagingly—one shot near the propeller well, quite shattering and tearing the plating in its passage, and starting up twenty-five bolts; another starting plate and twenty bolts; and slighter blows are numerous. In smoke-stack armor there are three shot-marks—one that pierced the armor, making a hole fifteen inches long and nine inches broad, displacing grating inside and breaking seven bolts. In the turret there are marks of nine shot; fifty-six of the bolts are broken perceptibly to us, the bolt-heads flying off inside of turret, and the bolts starting almost their length outside, some of them flying out completely, and being found at a considerable distance from the turret on deck. Doubtless many others are broken that we cannot detect, as by trying them we find others loosened. One shot struck the upper part of the turret, breaking through every plate, parting some of them in two, three, and four places. In pilot-house there



were marks of six shot, three of them 11-inch; twenty-one of the bolts were broken perceptibly, and others evidently started. The plates are also much started, and the pilot-house itself, I think, much damaged and wrecked; indeed, it is my opinion that four more such shot as it received would have demolished it. One shot at the base broke every plate through, and evidently nearly penetrated it. Both flag-staffs were struck, but were not entirely shot away, and the ensign remained flying throughout.

In making this minute detailed report of the damaging effects of shot upon this vessel, I have been influenced by a wish to point out wherein weak points are practically shown to exist; and I will add that this experience has proved in my mind, beyond a doubt, that to those above enumerated may be added all hatch-plates, anchor, well and propeller-well plates, and the tops of the turret and pilot-house, as entirely inadequate to defend the place they cover from being entirely penetrated; and in the propeller-well, wherein the propeller would probably be injured, and the pilot-house, wherein is contained the wheel for steering, and where exists the only lookout for the guidance of the vessel, and the top of the turret, from which the iron would be driven in upon the heads of those fighting the guns below, the effect, necessarily, would be damaging.

The case of the *Keokuk* requires little notice, except that her commander, A. C. Rhind, fought his ship gallantly until she was in a sinking condition, and then withdrew. She was riddled as completely as a wooden ship would have been. The *New Ironsides*, from the difficulty of managing her on the tide-way, was not brought into close action, and her armor, therefore, was not tested as was that of the *Monitors*. The *Passaic*, which was reported to have been more severely injured than any of the others, was sent to New York for repairs, and a board was appointed to survey her and make a report. This report has a very important bearing upon the result of the engagement, and is as follows:

NEW YORK, June 2, 1863.

DEAR SIR: In compliance with a request contained in a copy of a communication from the Navy Department dated May 21st, to examine the United States iron-clad steamer *Passaic* while she is on the ways, and report in writing the full damage done to that vessel by the fire of the batteries in the harbor of Charleston; also, whether she has been

strained or injured in any part by the gales she has encountered, or from any cause whatever, we have made the examination as requested, and beg leave to report.

1st. In regard to the damage by the fire of the batteries, but four shots have damaged any part of the structure to an extent to be worthy of any particular description. The first, marked A on the accompanying diagrams, struck the upper edge of the turret, glancing upward and striking the pilot-house as shown. The second, marked B, struck near the lower edge of the turret, broke the loose outside ring on the deck, and indenting the turret so as to break the lugs off the inside composition ring. The third, marked C, indented the turret about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch, cracking slightly the inside plate. The fourth, marked D, struck the armor on the port side about forty-seven feet eight inches from the bow, and nine and a half inches below the deck, starting or bending the three outer plates, breaking or starting one-third of the fastening bolts, leaving the remainder undisturbed and all the plates still in position.

As to the effects of these shots, the first raised the pilot-house  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch and started it over on one side, breaking two bolts in the pilot-house, but did not in any manner affect the working of the turret or the operations of the vessel.

The second shot, marked B, by the damage already mentioned, checked the operation of the turret, until the lugs of the composition rings, which got jammed under the turret, were removed, after which the turret could be operated as usual.

The third shot, marked C, apparently a 10-inch shot, so started or disturbed the turret as to damage the slides of the 11-inch gun, rendering it, for the time, unserviceable, by forcing the rails hard against the guide pieces on the carriage.

The fourth shot did not affect the efficiency of the armor, as, though a portion of bolts were broken, the whole of the plates still remained in their proper position.

The only damage affecting the fighting efficiency of the vessel was that by the third shot, disabling the working of the 11-inch gun, and the breaking of the lug, alluded to; and we would take the liberty of suggesting that this form of injury may hereafter be guarded against by fastening a very heavy iron ring or band around the base of the turret, to prevent its distortion, and leaving sufficient freedom between the rails of the carriage and the turret, so that any slight distortion of the turret will not affect the gun-carriages.

There were some seven or eight shots received upon the deck, though but three of them produced effects so serious as to require repairs, and

these repairs had been made before her return to this port. All the shots received upon the turret are shown in diagram No. 1, which represents the whole exterior circumference of the turret, laid down as a plane. The indentations by the shots varied from  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches in depth, none, however, damaging the turret further than described. Upon the pilot-house, three other shots, than that described, struck, making indentations from  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch to  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch depth, but doing no further damage.

Upon the armor of the vessel, besides the shots already described, there were marks of twelve other shots, making indentations varying from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches in depth, but inflicting no other serious damage.

The accompanying diagrams show the effects of the four worst shots already mentioned, and the diagram No. 1 shows all the shots received by the turret; No. 2 shows the effects of shot A upon the turret and pilot-house, and No. 3 shows the effect of shot D upon the armor, as already described.

On the whole, we are of the opinion that the only damage done by the batteries, affecting the fighting efficiencies of the vessel, was by the shot upon the turret, which disabled the 11-inch gun by deranging the gun-slides.

The ship, so far as the board could discover, is not strained or injured by the gales she has encountered. There has been a serious leak about the bow, which the board find difficulty in accounting for. It is probable that in dropping into the sea the water got under the deck-plates around the top of the anchor well; this can be guarded against hereafter by a slight alteration in the construction. There is also evidence of some slight leaks in some of the rivets, which can be easily remedied.

All of which is respectfully submitted, by your obedient servants,

J. C. ROWAN, *Captain U. S. N.*

CHAS. W. COPELAND.

GEO. W. QUINTARD.

M. F. MERRITT.

JOS. J. COMSTOCK.

*Admiral F. H. GREGORY, U. S. Navy, New York.*

The following table, prepared by the ordnance officer, Lieutenant A. S. Mackenzie, is a valuable part of the evidence in this case:

## Abstract of Expenditure of Ammunition, Ranges, etc., during the Engagement with the Fortifications in Charleston Harbor, April 7, 1863.

VESSELS.	CLASS OF GUNS.	TOTAL NO. OF FIRES.	NO. OF FIRES WITH			LENGTH OF FUSE.	CHARGES POWDER.	OBJECT AIMED AT.	REMARKS.
			Shell	Solid Shot	Cored Shot				
New Ironsides.	11-inch No. 1 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	Pounds.	Fort Moultrie.	
Do.	11-inch No. 3 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	11-inch No. 4 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	11-inch No. 5 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	11-inch No. 6 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	11-inch No. 7 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	11-inch No. 8 port.	1	1	1	1	.....	20	do.	
Do.	150-pdr. No. 2 starboard	1	1	1	1	.....	16	Fort Wagner.	
Montauk.	15-inch.	10	10	10	10	.....	35	Fort Sumter.	
Do.	11-inch.	17	1	16	1	5-second	{ 4.30	do.	
Passaic.	15-inch.	9	9	9	9	7 "	{ 13.15	1 15-inch and 1 11-inch	
Do.	11-inch.	4	2	2	2	10 "	{ 2.30	shell at Fort Moultrie;	
Weehawken.	15-inch.	11	11	11	11	10 "	{ 2.15	the rest at Fort Sumter	
Do.	11-inch.	15	15	15	15	10 "	85	Fort Sumter.	
Patapsco.	15-inch.	5	5	5	5	10 "	15	do.	
Do.	150-pdr.	5	5	5	5	Schenkie percussion.	85	do.	
Catskill.	15-inch.	10	10	10	10	10 and 15-second.	85	do.	
Do.	11-inch.	13	13	13	13	10 and 15 "	15	do.	
Nantuxet.	15-inch.	3	3	3	3	5-second	35	do.	
Do.	11-inch.	13	13	13	13	5 "	15	9 Sumter, 3 Wagner, 1	
Nahant.	15-inch.	7	4	3	3	{ 3 31-second	{ 35	Moultrie.	
Do.	11-inch.	8	4	4	4	{ 1 7 "	{ 4.30	1 10-second 11-inch shell	
Kookuk.	11-inch in forward turret	3	3	3	3	{ 1 10 "	{ 4.15	at Moultrie; rest at	
							20	Fort Sumter.	

At 2d fire, gun not being entirely run out, the after-baster was sprung and breeching stranded.

Vessels, 9; guns, 23; fires, 130; shell, 96; solid shot, 30; cored shot, 13. Range, from 550 to 2,100 yards.

Respectfully submitted,

A. S. MACKENZIE, Lieut. and Ord. Officer, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

Rear-Admiral S. F. Du Pont, commanding South Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

We shall have all the main facts necessary for the forming of correct opinions, by adding to the foregoing the exceedingly important official tables from the rebel documents—the one showing the effect of the projectiles on Fort Sumter, and the other the rebel statement of the fire of their own batteries:

TABLE OF EFFECTS OF PROJECTILES ON WALLS OF FORT SUMTER.

*The Numbers correspond with those on Drawing of Elevations, showing the Location of Points of Impact.*

NO.	PROJECTILE.	PENETRATION.		CRATER.				REMARKS.
				Height.		Width.		
		Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	
1	.....	2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.
2	Frag. shell. ....	6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.
3	.....	3	3	4	0	4	0	Embrasure "A," exterior concrete-keystone and interior embrasure-arch knocked out; masonry cracked.
4	15-inch. ....	9	3	0	4	0	0	Assisted No. 3; spent.
5	11-inch. ....	1	0	1	0	1	0	Penetrated concrete and new masonry facing.
6	15-inch. ....	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Ricochet and spent.
7	Frag. shell. ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.
8	.....	1	0	2	0	2	0	Apparently rifle-shot; no serious injury.
9	3 shots. ....	2	6	10	0	8	0	One 15-inch; other two not known; parapet wall cracked twenty-five in length; serious damage, perhaps, by exploding shell.
10	15-inch. ....	2	3	6	0	4	0	Interior arch of embrasure "B" dislocated; masonry between piers and embrasure badly shaken and projecting.
11	Frag. shell. ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.
12	15-inch. ....	1	6	3	0	3	0	Shook masonry.
13	Frag. shell. ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.
14	.....	1	6	3	0	3	0	Interior embrasure "C" arch broken; masonry cracked.
15	.....	2	2	3	0	3	0	Perhaps exploding shell.
16	15-inch. ....	1	3	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled, spent ball.
17	.....	1	6	3	0	3	0	Masonry shaken.
18	.....	3	0	5	0	5	0	Exploding shell on pier; not much internal injury.
19	.....	1	6	3	0	3	0	No serious injury.
20	.....	1	6	4	0	3	0	Masonry around embrasure "D" badly cracked and projecting inside.
21	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Penetrated, striking head of arch, and thrown upward, tearing away a quantity of masonry; not seriously damaging masonry; exploded in casemate.
22	15-inch. ....	5	0	4	0	3	0	Same effect as 23; destroyed embrasure "E."
23	11-inch. ....	5	0	2	0	2	0	Not seriously damaging body of masonry.
24	.....	2	6	3	6	3	6	Same effect as 23; destroyed embrasure "F;" exploded in parade.
25	15-inch. ....	5	0	4	0	4	0	Scaled; ricochet and spent.
26	11-inch. ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	No serious damage.
27	.....	1	4	2	3	2	0	No serious damage.
28	.....	1	0	.....	.....	.....	.....	Serious damage; wall not much cracked.
29	.....	2	4	5	0	5	0	Scaled.
30	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Knocked off one foot of angle.
31	15-inch. ....	1	0	3	0	4	0	Knocked off six inches of angle.
32	11-inch. ....	6	2	6	3	.....	.....	Oblique fire; scaled.
33	.....	5	3	0	2	0	0	Scaled.
34	Frag. shell. ....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Shook masonry.
35	.....	1	6	2	6	2	6	Broke, and projected in sole of embrasure "G."
36	15-inch. ....	1	3	3	.....	4	.....	Very oblique fire; no damage.
37	.....	10	2	0	3	0	0	do do
38	Frag. shell. ....	4	2	0	2	0	0	do do
39	.....	2	4	0	4	0	0	do do
40	.....	1	0	2	0	4	0	do do
41	.....	2	1	3	0	3	0	Exploding shell.

TABLE OF EFFECTS OF PROJECTILES, ETC.—(CONTINUED.)

NO.	PROJECTILE.	PENETRATION.		CRATER.				REMARKS.
				Height.		Width.		
		Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	Ft.	In.	
42	.....	.....	10	1	6	1	6	Oblique; scaled. No serious injury.
43	.....	1	2	2	0	2	0	
44	} Frag. shell.	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Scaled.  Scaled; very oblique. Exploding shell cracked parapet wall. Knocked out iron embrasure-slab, foot wide, 6 inches thick, 3 feet long; indented it 1½ inches, and broke it in three pieces; shook masonry.
45		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
46		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
47		.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
48	11-inch.....	2	4	5	0	8	0	No serious injury. Brick traverse, east <i>pan-coupe</i> . Entered western quarters and exploded, damaging walls.
49	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
50	.....	1	5	3	0	3	6	Entered western quarters and remained in quarters. Demolished 10-inch columbiad-carriage and chassis in southwest angle.
51	11-inch.....	2	6	5	0	7	0	
52	15-inch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Struck end stone masonry berme southeast angle. Four small holes knocked in brick arch roof of eastern quarters by grazing shots of fragments from traverse.
53	11-inch.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
54	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
55	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	

G. THOMAS COX, *Lieutenant of Engineers.*      WILLIAM H. ECHOLS, *Major of Engineers.*

#### RETURN OF GUNS AND MORTARS AT FORTS AND BATTERIES IN CHARLESTON HARBOR, ENGAGED WITH THE ABOLITION IRON-CLADS, APRIL 7, 1863.

FORT OR BATTERY.	10-INCH COLUMBIAD.	8-INCH DANIELS.	7-INCH BROOKS.	8-INCH COLUMBIAD.	45-POUNDER ROYAL.	24-POUNDER ROYAL.	24-POUNDER SMOOTH.	10-INCH MORTAR.	GRAND TOTAL.
Fort Sumter.....	4	2	2	8	7	1	13	7	
Fort Moultrie.....				9		5	5	2	
Battery Bee.....	5			1					
Battery Beauregard.....						1			
Battery at Cummings's Point.....	1	1				1			
Battery Wagner.....									
Total.....	10	3	2	19	7	8	18	9	76

#### RETURN OF CASUALTIES IN ACTION.

FORT OR BATTERY.	KILLED.	WOUNDED.				GRAND TOTAL.	REMARKS.
		Mortally.	Dangerously.	Severely.	Slightly.		
Fort Sumter.....		1		1	4		Splinters from traverse. Fall of flag-staff. Explosion of ammunition-chest.
Fort Moultrie.....	2			2	3		
Battery Wagner.....							
Total.....	2	1		3	7	14	

TABLE

SHOWING THE NUMBER, KIND, AND POSITION OF GUNS IN ACTION, AND NUMBER AND KIND OF PROJECTILES USED AGAINST THE IRON-CLAD FLEET BEFORE CHARLESTON, APRIL 7, 1863.

LOCATION.	No.	KIND OF GUN.	PROJECTILE.	SHOTS.
Fort Sumter, 810 shots, east and northeast faces, barbette.	3	7-inch Brooke rifles.....	Wrought-iron bolts.....	86
	4	10-inch columbiads.....	Solid shot.....	130
	4	8-inch ".....	".....	160
	5	42-pounder rifles.....	Shot and bolts.....	138
	2	9-inch Dahlgrens.....	Shot.....	54
	3	10-inch S. C. mortars.....	Shells filled with melted iron.....	40
	2	8-inch shell guns, navy.....	Shot.....	60
	2	8-inch " ".....	".....	50
1st tier casemate.	2	32-pounders.....	".....	100
2d tier casemate.	1	42-pounder rifle.....	".....	2
Fort Moultrie, 868 shots.	9	8-inch columbiads.....	Shot and 5 incendiary shells.....	344
	5	32-pounder rifles.....	192 bolts, 38 shells.....	230
	5	32-pounders.....	Shot.....	243
	3	10-inch S. C. mortars.....	Shells.....	51
Battery Bee, 288 shots.	5	10-inch columbiads.....	Shot.....	225
	1	8-inch ".....	".....	58
Battery Beauregard, 157 shots.	1	8-inch columbiad.....	Shot.....	64
	2	32-pounder rifle.....	41 bolts (75 lbs.), 45 shot, 7 shells.....	93
Cummings's Point, 65 shots.	1	10-inch columbiad.....	Shot.....	37
	1	9-inch Dahlgren.....	Shells.....	28
Battery Wagner, 26 shots.	1	32-pounder rifle.....	Shells.....	9
	1	24-pounder ".....	".....	1
	2	32-pounders.....	Shot.....	16
No. of guns..... 69			Total No. shots fired.....	2,309

WM. H. ECHOLS, Major of Engineers.

Official:

G. THOS. COX, Lieutenant of Engineers.

#### RETURN OF AMMUNITION EXPENDED IN ACTION APRIL 7, 1863.

FORT OR BATTERY.	SHOT, ROUND.				SHELL, ROUND.		SHOT, RIFLE.				BOLTS, RIFLE.	TUBES.	POUNDS OF CANNON-POWDER USED.
	10-inch columbiad.	8-inch columbiad.	9-inch Dahlgren.	32-pounder.	10-inch mortar.	8-inch columbiad, incendiary.	7-inch Brooke.	42-pounder.	32-pounder.	32-pounder shell.	32-pounder.	Friction tubes.	
Fort Sumter.....	130	270	54	100	40		86	140	21		192	1,047	7,630
Fort Moultrie.....		839		243	51	5						1,300	7,375
Battery Bee.....	225	58										350	8,940
Battery Wagner.....									29			27	133
Battery Beauregard.....		64							45	7	41	157	1,135
Battery Cummings's P't.....	40		36									73	860
Fort Johnson.....					2							2	11
Totals.....	385	781	80	343	93	5	86	140	88	45	233	2,856	21,038

Chief-Engineer Stimers, who was present outside the bar during the fight, examined the Monitors next morning, and

came to the following conclusion, which he communicated officially to the Department: "In consideration of the vast importance to our country that this stronghold of the rebellion should be reduced, I take the liberty to express to the Department my firm opinion that the obstructions can be readily passed with the means already provided, and our entire fleet of iron-clads pass up successfully to the wharves of Charleston, and that the Monitor vessels still retain sufficient enduring powers to enable them to pass all the forts and batteries which may reasonably be expected." He had also great confidence in the efficiency of the torpedo-rafts designed by Ericsson, for the double purpose of removing torpedoes and blowing up obstructions. These inventions the naval officers were unwilling to use.

Such was the famous attack of the 7th of April, 1863, on the fortifications of Charleston, and such were the results as they appeared to those who were witnesses of, and actors in, that novel fight. Admiral Du Pont and a majority of his officers did not deem it safe to renew the attack; they evidently regarded the Monitors and the big guns as unsuited to such a purpose, and did not believe that they could either subdue, or again endure the fire of the forts and batteries. They also declared them unfit for blockading vessels outside the bar, and Du Pont stated that they could not safely remain within the bar, and a difference of opinion between him and the Government on these points led to his being relieved by Admiral Dahlgren. In studying the character of this important battle, there are several points which deserve special consideration.

*The Power of the Monitors and 15-inch Guns as against Forts.*—It would seem that the friends of the new war-ship and the mammoth gun, in reasoning from the assumed invulnerability of the Monitors, and the anticipated effect of the 15-inch shot and shell, had not made sufficient allowance for the slowness of their fire, which did not allow them so to sweep embrasures and parapets as to prevent the enemy from manning their guns, as the more rapid fire of the New Ironsides, under favoring circumstances, could do. When the attack had been made with no apparent result, when the idea of a second attack was abandoned, and the iron-clads were withdrawn, neither



those who opposed nor those who had confidence in the new weapons were in a frame of mind which would lead to a cool and candid examination of the facts. In deciding the question of the power of iron-clads against forts, the actual force engaged must first be considered.

In this calculation, we must, first of all, lay the *New Ironsides* out of the account. She was not brought into close action, and she exerted no influence upon the result. Next, the *Keokuk* must also be laid aside. She was not a Monitor proper; she fired three shots only from a 11-inch gun, and was disabled as quickly as a wooden gunboat would have been. The attacking force by which Monitors were to be tested was thus reduced to seven vessels and fourteen guns, exposed to the concentrated fire, at short range, of one hundred guns, according to the estimate of our officers, and of sixty-nine or seventy-six, as differently stated in the rebel reports.

If the question is confined to the mammoth guns, then another alteration in the data must be made. There were only seven 15-inch guns in the fleet. So far as "big guns" were concerned, then, the battle was between seven guns on the Monitors and seventy-six or one hundred on land, as we accept one estimate or the other.

One point demanding attention is the alleged inaccuracy of the Monitors' fire. This was confidently charged by the opposers of the new vessels, and there was then no means of disproving it; but the rebel official report here presented supplies the answer. One hundred and twenty-four shots were fired at Sumter; and it must be remembered that the Monitors had to take their positions, and obtain their range, under the most terrific fire to which vessels were ever exposed, and yet the rebel reports admit that fifty-five of these shot or shell struck the walls of the fort, and others struck inside the fort, so that every other shot must have reached the mark. If the firing of the 15-inch guns is separately considered, it will be found that at least one-half the shots must have taken effect, either directly or by fragments of exploding shells. The table settles the question of accuracy in favor both of the Monitors and the 15-inch guns.

Another assertion very confidently made was, that the 15-

inch gun had neither smashing force nor penetrating power enough to injure the walls of Sumter; that the shot barely reached the fort, doing it no damage. The rebel official table of injuries to the fort settles this question also. The distance at which the Monitors fought is differently stated by the rebels and our officers. As the commanders of the forts at Charleston had placed the obstructions, the buoys, and guides by which their guns had been trained, and the range determined, they must have known the distance at which they were placed from the different batteries. Whether it was truly stated by them is the only question. Their official reports place the turreted iron-clads about a thousand yards from their guns. Our officers believed that some of them were as near as five hundred and fifty or six hundred yards during one part of the battle. The rebels had measured the distance; our officers formed their estimate amid the smoke and confusion of the fight, and from the limited view which could be obtained from the small holes in the pilot-houses. Each one must form his own judgment upon this point; but the effect of the shot is fortunately placed beyond dispute. At least two of the 15-inch shells *passed through the walls* of Sumter and exploded—one in a casemate, and the other in the parade-ground. This one fact settles beyond all dispute, the question of the power of the mammoth gun. Its projectiles *went through* the walls of the fort. Other 15-inch shells exploded *against* the walls, making deep craters; embrasures were destroyed, and one shot cracked the masonry for twenty-five feet in length; and one large shell went over the parapet, demolished the officers' quarters, and damaged "several walls." Other 15-inch shell and shot, and fragments of large shells, which had struck, were picked up in and about the fort. These facts are taken from the official rebel documents. If, then, it is considered that only about fifty shots were fired from the large guns, it will be seen that their friends had no reason to be disappointed at the results; and it is probable, that if Du Pont and his officers had known the effect of their fire, they would have renewed the attack. Nothing is more certain, in view of what was actually done, than that Sumter could not long have resisted even such a fire as the Monitors delivered that day. The result would have been, not such a gradual

crumbling of the walls as took place under the long-range firing of the heavy rifles afterward from the land batteries, but they would have come down with a crash, and the whole interior of the fort would have been torn in fragments by the enormous shells. But in judging of the actual power of the large guns, one very important fact must be considered: these guns were novel weapons, and there was an apprehension that they might be bursted in firing, and they were used with a caution which, in the light of subsequent experience, appears like timidity. The charge of powder was limited to thirty-five pounds. These guns have since been fired repeatedly and safely with double that charge—with seventy pounds of powder, or one hundred of mammoth powder, which is equal to seventy or seventy-five of common powder. From the results that were actually reached with only thirty-five pounds of powder, it is rendered certain that, if the charge had been suitably increased, every shot and shell striking fairly would have gone through the walls, and the fort would have been destroyed, or, at the very least, it would have been so shattered, that none would have doubted the propriety of a second attack. It would have been seen that it could be easily destroyed by a continued fire.

The question of the endurance of the Monitors under fire, and the damages which they received, remains to be considered. In order to present this subject clearly, it will be well to take the case of each Monitor separately. The Passaic was the only one whose injuries required that she should be sent North for repairs. The report of the board appointed to survey her condition presents the following conclusion: "The only damage done by the batteries, affecting the fighting efficiency of the vessel, was by the shot upon the turret, which disabled the 11-inch gun, by disarranging the gun-slides." By turning to Captain Drayton's report, we find the statement that "several hours being (were) necessary to put it again in working order." The Passaic then, after the fight, was in battle order, or might have been, with several hours' work upon the slides of the 11-inch gun-carriage, the 15-inch gun having received no injury. The Weehawken was not disabled. The Montank, according to Lieutenant Worden, received no material injury. Commander Ammen, of the Patapsco, made the following report: "No

damage was done which disabled her, although injuries were received which, multiplied, would do so"—a statement which might have been safely made by the commander of Fort Sumter. Commander G. W. Rodgers, of the Catskill, states that his vessel received no serious injury, except that one shot broke through the deck plating and planking. Commander Fairfax, of the Nantucket, reports no serious injury, except the jamming of the port-stopper of the 15-inch gun. The next morning the engineer, G. H. White, reported, "the difficulty was overcome this morning." Commander John Downes, of the Nahant, presented a very long and minute list of injuries, even to the hitting of the flag-staff, which, fortunately, did not prevent the ensign from "flying throughout." The only injury which prevented the vessel from continuing the action was the jamming of the turret, which was remedied the next day.

It would seem that but one conclusion can be drawn from these statements. They were made by officers who were unwilling to renew the engagement (at least a majority of them), and of course they would not, under such circumstances, be likely to underrate the extent of the injuries; and yet, according to these reports, there is nothing to show that the engagement could not have been renewed the next day, even the Passaic not excepted.

It would be alike ungenerous and unreasonable to censure harshly either Admiral Du Pont or his officers—men of courage and skill as they were—for they were placed in novel circumstances, and were dealing with weapons hitherto untried. The injuries which their vessels had received really appeared more dangerous than they actually were, and perhaps they were magnified by being seen through a slight haze of prejudice. Moreover, they had reason to fear the torpedoes and other obstructions so thickly planted about the harbor, whose number, character, and destructive power they could not correctly estimate; and this uncertainty served to magnify the danger.

Any one who has carefully inspected some of these Monitors after they had passed through the almost countless subsequent battles with the lower batteries, under the direction of Admiral Dahlgren, and who looks calmly back upon that first attack in the light of after-experience, will be compelled to the conclusion

that Du Pont and his assistant officers lost a magnificent opportunity of making themselves forever illustrious; and if the attack had been renewed in the spirit which was shown in some other foremost naval battles of the war, Sumter and Charleston would have been captured then.

The question still remains whether the performance of the Monitors at Charleston justified the expectations of the Department and the friends of the turreted ship and heavy guns. Several points deserve consideration in connection with this inquiry. The projectiles used against them were far more formidable than any before used in naval war. Enormous bolts were fired from the 10-inch columbiads, with perilous charges of powder, and the calibre of some of the rifles was eight inches. These were used at distances varying, according to the different statements, from five hundred and fifty yards to one thousand yards. It is scarcely necessary to state that the fire from those batteries would have demolished in a few minutes a squadron of wooden ships of any description. No inference against such a statement can be drawn from the result at the New Orleans forts or at Mobile. There was little similarity between the cases. Again, the manner in which the Keokuk was riddled and destroyed shows conclusively that had the Ironsides been brought into close action, she would have been destroyed. The report of Captain Turner, who commanded her, is sufficient proof that this is true. He says: "One of these shots, striking the forward facing of the port-shutter, carried it away instantly. My impression is, had you been able to get this ship into close position, where her broadsides would have been brought to bear, that not one port-shutter would have been left under the fire of such enormous projectiles as were thrown from the enemy's works, multiplied on every side of us." It may be safely said, in view of subsequent experience, that no broadside iron-clad in Europe, then afloat, could have endured that fire.

The Monitors received it under the most unfavorable circumstances. This was inevitable on account of the plan of the attack, which was to attempt a reduction of the forts, instead of pushing past them, and through the obstructions, up to the city. It is perfectly clear that this plan would not have succeeded, either below New Orleans, or at Mobile. Had it been

adopted by Farragut, he would have lost his fleet in both instances. Instead of attempting to pass the forts, the Monitors, one after another, stopped and turned at the obstructions, the line was broken, and they were huddled together confusedly at the very point upon which the rebel guns had been previously trained, in danger of running into each other, and of striking bottom, and hindering each other's fire. In this position, the Monitors were literally targets for the rebel gunners, placed at point-blank range, at the very point where it was known by previous trial that the shot would strike. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that they were hit, according to the reports of their commanders, two hundred and forty-eight times, and the all-important fact remains that they not only kept afloat where no ordinary ships could have survived, but, working at such disadvantage, inflicted serious damage upon Sumter, and then carried all their crews, with perhaps a single exception, alive out of action, and were themselves in a condition in which they could have renewed the battle after a few hours spent in repairs. This, had all the facts then been known, would have convinced all that the Monitors and the 15-inch guns, even in that unsuccessful attack, proved themselves eminently worthy of the confidence of the Government. In these statements, no disparagement of the New Ironsides is intended. She was the most powerful broadside iron-clad then afloat, and the unequalled power of her broadside for ordinary purposes was abundantly shown in the subsequent operations in the harbor.

The great anxiety of the Navy Department that the attack on Charleston should be successful, in order that the iron-clads might be released for operations in the gulf, is expressed in the following letter of the Secretary :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *April 11, 1863.*

SIR: It has been suggested to the Department by the President, in view of operations elsewhere, and especially by the Army of the Potomac, that you should retain a strong force off Charleston, even should you find it impossible to carry the place. You will continue to menace the rebels, keeping them in apprehension of a renewed attack, in order that they may be occupied, and not come North or go West to the aid of the rebels with whom our forces will soon be in conflict. Should you be successful, as we trust and believe you will be, it is expected

that General Hunter will continue to keep the rebels employed and in constant apprehension, so that they shall not leave the vicinity of Charleston. This detention of the iron-clads, should it be necessary in consequence of a repulse, can be but for a few days.

I trust your success will be such that the iron-clads can be or will have been dispatched to the Gulf when this reaches you. There is intense anxiety in regard to your operations. This day is the anniversary of the assault on Sumter, and God grant that its recurrence may witness the destruction of that fortress by our naval forces under your command!

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Rear-Admiral S. F. Du Pont,*

*Commanding S. A. B. Squadron, Port Royal, S. C.*

The desire of the President to avoid the appearance of an entire defeat after the repulse, and his determination to retain the fleet inside the bar, is shown in his brief telegraphic dispatch to Du Pont:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *April 18, 1863.*

Hold your position inside the bar near Charleston; or if you shall have left it, return to it and hold it till further orders. Do not allow the enemy to erect new batteries or defences on Morris Island. If he has begun it, drive him out. I do not herein order you to renew the general attack. That is to depend on your own discretion or a further order.

A. LINCOLN.

*Admiral Du Pont.*

The views of Admiral Du Pont, and probably a majority of his officers, are given in his reply, from which, in order that he may present his own case, an extract is here given:

The Department will probably have known, on the 12th instant, the result of the attack. In my dispatch of the 11th instant, dated off Charleston, the Department was made aware of my withdrawal, with the iron-clads, from the very insecure anchorage inside the bar, and just in time to save the Monitors from an easterly gale, in which, in my opinion and that of their commanders, they would have been in great peril of being lost on Morris Island beach. Their ground tackling has been found to be insufficient, and from time to time they have dragged even in close harbors.

I have since been doing all in my power to push forward their repairs in order to send them to the Gulf, as directed, but I presume that your dispatch of the 11th instant, and the telegraphic message from the President, revoke your previous order.

I shall spare no exertions in repairing, as soon as possible, the serious injuries sustained by the Monitors in the late attack, and shall get them inside Charleston bar with all dispatch in accordance with the order of the President. I think it my duty, however, to state to the Department that this will be attended with great risk to these vessels from the gales which prevail at this season and from the continuous fire of the enemy's batteries, which they can neither silence, nor prevent the erection of new ones.

The New Ironsides can only cross the bar with certainty at spring tides, which are twice a month. She is more vulnerable than the Monitors, and at the distance she must necessarily anchor, could not elevate her guns sufficiently to reach any batteries of the enemy, while, at the same time, she would be liable to injury, particularly in her wooden ends, from a fire which she could not return. If this vessel is withdrawn from the blockade and placed inside, the blockade may be raised by the rebel rams coming out of Charleston harbor at night by Maffit's Channel, in which case she could give no assistance to the fleet outside. But for the New Ironsides, the raid of the 31st January would have been repeated with more serious effect.

The lower and greater part of Morris Island exhibits a ridge or row of sand-hills, affording to the enemy a natural parapet against the fire of shipping, and facilities for erecting batteries in very strong positions. The upper part of the island is crossed by Fort Wagner, a work of great strength, and covered by the guns of Fort Sumter. The island is in full reëcommunication with Charleston, and can, in spite of us, draw fresh reënforcements as rapidly as they may be required. Shoals extend from the island, which prevent the near approach of the Monitors, and our experience at Fort McAllister does not encourage me to expect that they will reduce well-defended sand-batteries, where the damage inflicted by day is readily repaired by the unstinted labor of the night. The ships, therefore, can neither cover the landing, nor afterward protect the advance of the small force of the army available for operations in this quarter, which will meet fresh troops at every sand-hill, and may look also for a reverse fire from the batteries on James Island.

As it is considered necessary to menace Charleston, by a demonstration of land and naval forces, North Edisto will afford a better point from which to threaten an advance, and a concentration of troops and



ships in that quarter would accomplish the purpose of the Government, mentioned in your dispatch of the 11th instant, as it is a military point from which Charleston could be attacked now, James Island being fully occupied by the enemy's batteries.

I have deemed it proper and due to myself to make these statements, but I trust I need not add that I will obey all orders with the utmost fidelity, even when my judgment is entirely at variance with them, such as the order to reoccupy the unsafe anchorage for the iron-clads off Morris Island, and an intimation that a renewal of the attack on Charleston may be ordered, which, in my judgment, would be attended with disastrous results, involving the loss of this coast.

These, and the previously-quoted statements and opinions of Admiral Du Pont and his officers, show with what extreme difficulty innovations, however valuable, can be introduced against the established practice and preconceived opinions of a profession of whatever kind. Du Pont was an accomplished officer, and had won a reputation in the wooden walls which were the sailor's pride, and with the ordinary armament of such ships. He had achieved a brilliant victory at Hilton Head with the usual instruments. Naturally, the younger officers would be inclined to sympathize with their popular chief, and their opinions were moulded, unconsciously perhaps, by his.

They regarded with suspicion, not to say dislike, a new war-ship, the work of an engineer, not of a naval constructor, a product of a machine-shop, not of a ship-yard, which looked to an old sailor more like a huge floating metallic coffin than a ship, and armed with such guns as never before had appeared on the water.

It required more than ordinary independence, more than ordinary power to see beneath the surface of things, more than common judgment of mechanical forces to estimate truly the value of this *fighting steam-engine*, this *machine*, for ship it could not properly be called. It seemed a most humiliating descent for a man to go down from the quarter-deck of such a magnificent frigate as the Wabash, or Minnesota, and become the submarine captain of a submerged iron canoe. No one has ever insinuated, so far as the writer knows, that there was an intention to destroy confidence in the Monitors; but no one acquainted with all the circumstances will probably deny that

they were placed in the very position where, if it were possible for the rebel batteries to sink or disable them, it would have been done. They were huddled almost helplessly together, in the very focus of a hundred guns, and held there during the stress of the fight; the broadside iron-clad frigate, meanwhile, lying off at double the distance of the Monitors, where she did not fire a shot at Sumter.

A short time only was needed to show that Admiral Du Pont was mistaken in all his main opinions. The subsequent use of the Monitors by Admiral Dahlgren proved that they could safely have endured another fight with the forts. He proved that the broadsides of the New Ironsides could sweep the rebels from their guns wherever she was brought in proper range, and that she was thus an invaluable co-worker with the Monitors; and he also demonstrated that the monitors and Ironsides could lie safely within the bar, and thus with his iron-clads the harbor of Charleston was effectually closed. Du Pont was soon relieved by Dahlgren.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### CAPTURE OF THE IRON-CLAD ATLANTA BY THE WEEHAWKEN. ;

IN November, 1861, the English blockade-runner *Fingal* passed the blockading squadron at Savannah, and ran safely into the harbor. She was so closely watched that she was unable again to get to sea, and the rebel authorities finally determined to convert her into an iron-clad war-ship. For this purpose she was cut down, so as to leave the deck about two feet above the water. Upon this deck a casemate was built, with sides inclined at an angle of twenty-nine degrees with the horizon, large enough to mount four heavy rifles of the Brooke pattern. Her iron armor was four inches thick, composed of two layers of plates, seven inches wide and two inches thick, the inner one running horizontally, and the outer vertically. These were secured to a wooden backing of oak and pine, eighteen inches thick. Her extreme length was two hundred and four feet, her breadth forty-one feet, and her draught of water nearly sixteen feet. The battery-deck was of great strength, built of solid timber, seventeen inches thick, resting on beams ten inches thick. The accompanying plates represent her general appearance and plan of construction. Each port-hole was closed by an iron shutter of the same thickness as the side-armor. The bow terminated in an iron beak, so that the vessel could be used as a ram; and a wooden pole, which could be lowered beneath the water, projected beyond the ram, and carried at the end a percussion torpedo. It is easily seen that she was a formidable antagonist. The general type of the rebel iron-clads was followed in her construction. The main idea was that of a sloping casemate rising from a low deck, while the

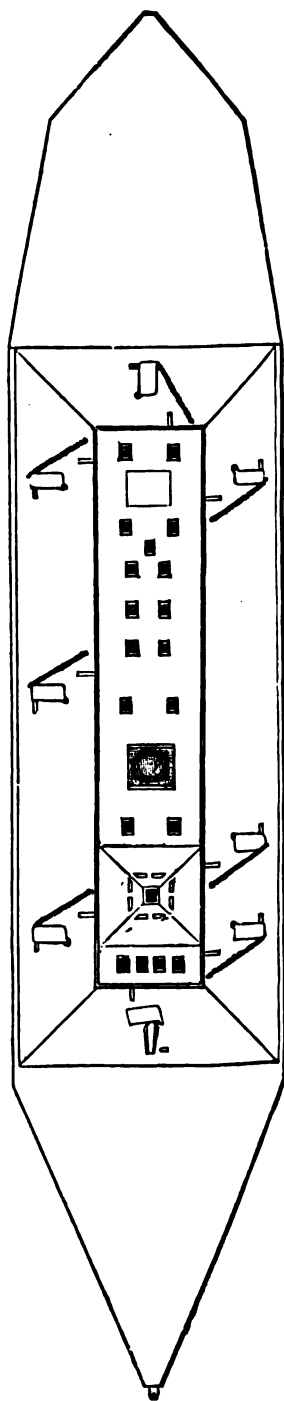
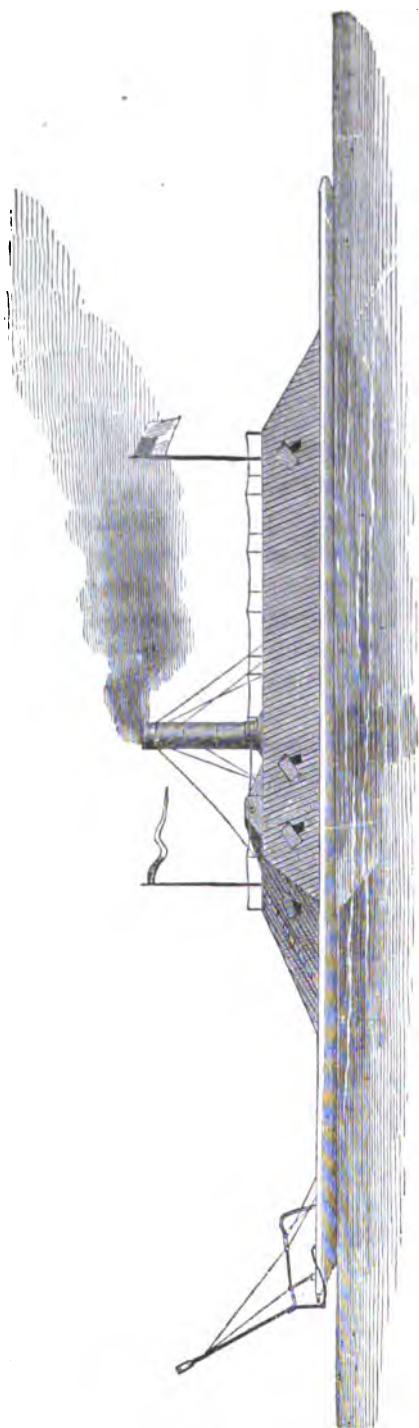
prow was usually armed with solid iron, and sometimes a torpedo was added, as in the case of the Atlanta. The casemate of the Merrimack extended nearly the whole length of the frigate's deck, but in vessels subsequently built it was shortened, and the number of guns was diminished, so that the later forms approached the appearance of a Monitor with a sloping stationary casemate instead of the revolving turret.

The defensive armor of the Atlanta was in thickness about equal to that of the Warrior and La Gloire class, though the plates were inferior in quality; but subsequent experiments have conclusively shown that the result would have been the same had the Atlanta been clothed with the armor of the New Ironsides or with that of the Warrior. As the first contest between the 15-inch guns and an armored ship, this brief battle excited the greatest interest both in America and Europe. It was a Monitor with the new American weapon against a vessel whose armor represented very nearly in resisting power that of the broadside iron-clads of Europe.

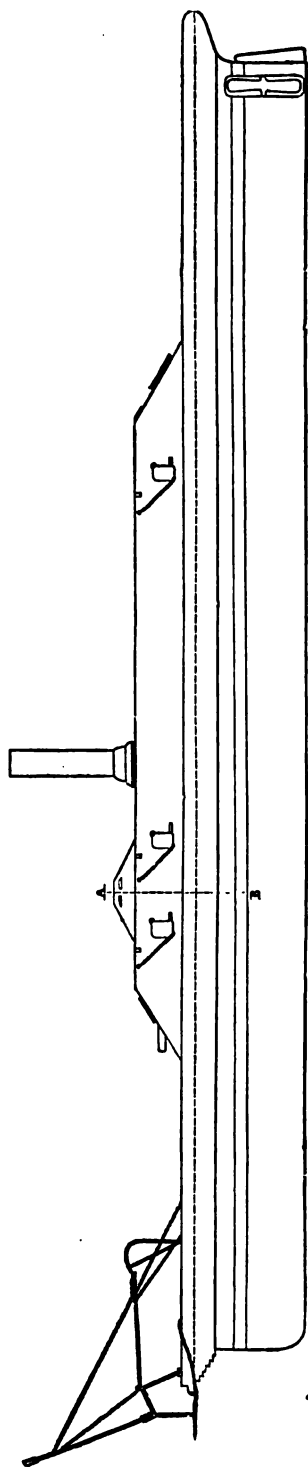
The rebels were entirely confident of the superiority of their vessel. They had measured, as they thought accurately, the power of the Monitors and the big guns by their effect upon Fort McAllister and at Charleston, and they fully believed that the Atlanta's armor would resist their shot, while they also relied very much upon their heavy rifles at close quarters, and upon their iron beak and their torpedo upon the end of the projecting boom. This vessel came down from Savannah, through Wilmington River, on the 17th of June, and appeared in Warsaw Sound.

In anticipation of her visit, the Monitors Weehawken and Nahant had been sent down by Admiral Du Pont, and some iron-clads at Savannah were preparing to pass out by Wilmington River and the sound. She was first seen when about three miles from the Nahant, and appeared to be coming on very rapidly. Both Monitors were at anchor. The time was just after daylight. The Weehawken slipped her cable instantly, and turned seaward as if in flight, preparing, however, meanwhile, rapidly for action. This was at 4.20 in the morning. At 4.30 the Weehawken turned and headed up the sound, toward her enemy. The Nahant, having no pilot, followed in

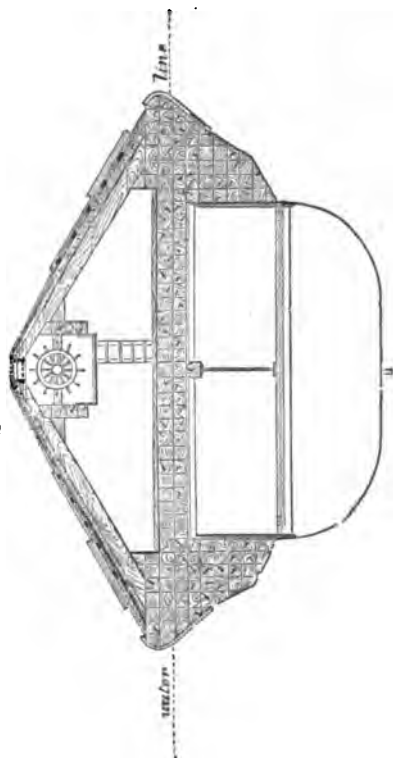
REBEL IRON-CLAD ATLANTA, CAPTURED IN WARSAW SOUND, JUNE 17, 1863.



REBEL IRON-CLAD ATLANTA, CAPTURED IN WARSAW SOUND, JUNE 17, 1868,



*Side Elevation.*



the Weehawken's wake. At 4.45 the Atlanta, being about one and a half miles distant, fired the first shot, which passed across the stern of the Weehawken and struck near the Nahant. At this time the Atlanta lay across the channel, apparently waiting the attack, but still firing. At 5.15 the Weehawken, having approached to within three hundred yards, opened her fire. Fifteen minutes after, the Weehawken having fired five shots, the Atlanta hauled down the rebel colors and hoisted a white flag.

At this time two steamers full of people that had come down to see "the capture of the Yankee Monitors," ran rapidly back toward Savannah. The Atlanta had on board twenty-one officers and a crew of one hundred and twenty-four men. Her speed was stated by her officers to be about ten knots, and they said they had confidently expected to capture both the Monitors; after which, from the instruments on board, it appeared that they intended to go to sea. As her engines were fine ones, made in Glasgow, and her hull a good model, there seemed to be no reason why she might not have made an ocean voyage. The action was so brief as to admit of little description. The Nahant did not share in the action, and the Weehawken fired but five shots, four of which struck the Atlanta. The very first of these spread consternation through the rebel ship. It was a 15-inch shot, and although it struck her sloping casemate obliquely, at an angle of fifty degrees with the keel, it smashed through both the iron armor and its wood backing, strewing the deck with splinters, prostrating some forty men by the concussion, and wounding several by broken pieces of the armor and splinters of wood. The crew was much demoralized by this first shot, and it virtually settled the contest. The second shot, an 11-inch, did little damage. The third, a 15-inch shot, knocked off the top of the pilot-house, wounding the two pilots and stunning the men at the wheel; and the fourth, supposed to be an 11-inch shot, destroyed one of her port-stoppers. Sixteen of her men were wounded. She was valued by the appraisers at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars—a rich prize to be won in fifteen minutes, with only five shots, and without the loss on our part of a single man.

This battle produced on the minds of candid and thoughtful

men as deep an impression as the fight with the Merrimack had done. For, although the power of the 15-inch gun was not then fully known, it was seen that they would shatter and pierce the armor of the European iron-clads, at least such of them as were already afloat. As the fight of the Merrimack with the Cumberland, Congress, and Minnesota, virtually set aside as worthless for war purposes the vast wooden navies of Europe, so, if the significance of this battle could have been fully known, it would have been seen that a second revolution had been begun in naval war, and that the broadside iron-clads then afloat in Europe would be nearly as helpless when exposed to the new American gun as were the wooden ships when riddled by the Merrimack. England and France awoke slowly and unwillingly to a consciousness of the superiority of the American ships and guns; and although great pains were subsequently taken to conceal in England the real power of the 15-inch gun, the startling fact that the 8-inch iron-plate was actually pierced at Shoeburyness with little more than half the charge of powder that we have often used in the gun, could not be explained away.



## CHAPTER XXXV.

### OPERATIONS AT CHARLESTON SUBSEQUENT TO THE ATTACK OF APRIL 7, 1863.

REAR-ADMIRAL DU PONT having asked to be relieved from his command, after his unsuccessful attack on Charleston, Rear-Admiral A. H. Foote, who had shown such skill and courage on the Western rivers, at Forts Henry and Donelson, and Island No. 10, was offered the command of the South Atlantic Squadron. Before he could assume its duties, death deprived the country of his invaluable services; and Rear-Admiral Dahlgren was selected for this post, and repaired to Charleston. He received the command of the squadron from Du Pont, July 4, 1863. Brigadier-General Gillmore had also succeeded General Hunter in the command of the land forces there.

Upon the assumption that the Monitors could not remain within the bar, nor be safe at sea outside, Du Pont had withdrawn them all. The first step of Admiral Dahlgren was to collect the iron-clads from the different points where they had been sent, and take them with the Ironsides inside of Charleston Bar; and, notwithstanding the opinions so freely expressed to the contrary, they remained there in safety till Charleston was evacuated. For the purpose of estimating correctly the value of the Monitors, and their powers for offence and endurance, no man in the Navy was better fitted than Rear-Admiral Dahlgren. If there was any point on which he was liable to err in judgment, it was in regard to the 15-inch gun. Perhaps there was no man whose opinion was entitled to more weight than his own, even in regard to that. By a skilful application of scientific principles, he produced a gun which placed at once



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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1991; 266: 1033-1036.

[illegible]

There is a clear and consistent gap between the results of the first and second rounds of the survey. The results of the first round are generally more positive than those of the second round, and the gap is largest for the respondents who are not employed in the public sector.

[illegible]



*C. W. Hoote*



American ordnance in the very first rank—a gun whose efficiency and great safety were abundantly proved by the sure tests of the war. The distinguishing features of this gun are, its peculiar form, which secures it against bursting, and its homogeneousness of material, in distinction from what is called a “built-up” gun, such as the Armstrong and Parrott rifles, and the kind of material, cast iron, instead of wrought iron or steel.

No one, of course, can now predict what will be the ultimate result of experiments in ordnance; but thus far every experience points to the conclusion that guns made of more than one kind of metal, and “built-up” guns of all kinds, will be abandoned; that the form of the Dahlgren cannon will in the main be adopted, and if so, Admiral Dahlgren’s two leading ideas of shape and material must govern the production of the future ordnance of the nations.

The 15-inch gun is a Dahlgren in shape, and a Rodman in the method used for cooling the casting. Admiral Dahlgren would have chosen a 13-inch gun, instead of the 15-inch, which he thought could be used with a larger charge of powder than he believed was safe in the larger cannon; and his fear of exposing the lives of the men, and possibly a natural unwillingness that a gun of his pattern should burst, led him to restrict the charge of the 15-inch to thirty-five pounds of powder, when subsequent experience has shown that seventy and even more can be safely used. Among those who have given character and efficiency to American ordnance, who have given practical power to our national idea of the heavy smashing shot, Admiral Dahlgren stands preëminent, and his hesitation at first to adopt the 15-inch calibre arose from a prudent desire to advance carefully toward that, by experiments with an intermediate size.

The careful, scientific manner in which he noted every operation of the Monitors and New Ironsides in the harbor of Charleston, was of the utmost importance to the Government, and enabled the public to form, on reliable ground, that favorable judgment which has never been reversed.

The plan of the rebels, after the failure of the 7th of April, had a double purpose. One was, so to increase the defences of Morris Island as to render it impregnable, and make it impos-

sible for our ships to remain inside the bar ; for, as experience had shown, if the blockading squadron could be kept outside, Charleston, with the help of England, could still retain a considerable commerce. The other was, to prepare a second line of defence inside of Sumter, upon which the city could rely in case our forces should drive them from Morris Island. The policy of our Government at the same time underwent a partial change. An inspection of the theatre of the war, and a knowledge of the direction in which its great forces were sweeping, made it evident that the occupation of Charleston was of very little importance in a military point of view ; and it was thought, that if the harbor could be effectually sealed, if Fort Sumter could be destroyed, for its moral effect, and if the rebel forces could be held there, for the defence of the city, instead of going North to reënforce their friends elsewhere, every really important point would be gained, even if the city itself should not be captured.

At this time the rebels were in full possession of Morris Island. Near the northern extremity they had already erected the strong Fort Wagner, which cost so much severe fighting to reduce, and at the extreme north point was Battery Gregg, while batteries, though not as yet strong ones, were planted on the southern point of the island, on the north side of Lighthouse Inlet, and opposite the points on Folly Island where our forces under General Gillmore lay.

Our officers were apprehensive that, if the rebels were allowed time, they would construct works as strong as Wagner on the south end of Morris Island, and thus render it very difficult, if not impossible, for our troops to gain a lodgment there. General Gillmore and Admiral Dahlgren therefore determined upon an immediate attack, the general purpose being to gain possession of Morris Island, so that our iron-clads, at least, could lie unmolested within the bar ; while it was believed that the new heavy rifles would demolish Sumter from Cummings's Point, the northern extremity of the island. Then, if Sumter could be thus carried, the way would be comparatively open for an attack upon the defences of the inner harbor, should such an attempt be deemed advisable.

The 10th of July was fixed upon for this joint attack upon

the Morris Island batteries. General Gillmore had planted masked guns on Folly Island, bearing upon the rebel position on the north side of the inlet.

The Monitors were held outside the bar until all on land was ready. When General Gillmore opened fire, they moved up to a position where they could enfilade the rebel works with their enormous shells. The rebels, unable to endure this fire, were soon dispersed, and retreated upon Wagner, abandoning the south end of the island; and, at the same time, General Gillmore's troops crossed the narrow inlet, and thus gained a foothold upon the island, which insured the capture of Wagner, and the destruction of Sumter.

As it was then thought possible to carry Fort Wagner by an assault, immediately after our troops had planted themselves in their new position, the iron-clads were moved up abreast of that work, and engaged until 6 P. M., in the hope of so far weakening it, as to render an assault practicable. It was, however, an earth-work, or rather *sand-work*, which, when knocked out of place by our shells, would almost of itself run into position again, while there were very strong bomb-proofs which sheltered the garrison. General Gillmore assaulted the work next morning at daybreak, and was repulsed.

The power of endurance of the Monitors under heavy fire was well tested in this action. The Catskill was struck sixty times, a large percentage of the hits being very severe. She fired one hundred and twenty-eight rounds, and yet she was ready to go into the fight the next day. The first action was fought at a distance of twelve hundred yards, the state of the tide not permitting a nearer approach.

On the 18th of July another combined attack was made. This fight began on the ebb-tide and at the same distance as before, about twelve hundred yards; but at 4 P. M. the flowing-tide allowed the vessels to approach to about three hundred yards, when the garrison was driven to the bomb-proofs, and the fort was silenced so that not a single shot was afterward fired at the vessels. About dark the troops made another assault, and were again repulsed.

It having been found by repeated trials that Wagner could not be taken by assault with the force which General Gillmore



had at his command, it was decided to capture it by regular approaches with trenches. In this work both the Monitors and the New Ironsides played a most important part. In fact, it does not appear how Wagner could have been taken without their assistance. The north end of the island was in the possession of the rebels, and, of course, in communication with Charleston and the other forts, and Wagner could at any time be reënforced; and it would have been quite as easy for the rebels to have advanced by sap toward Gillmore's batteries as for him to approach them, had it not been for the presence of the iron-clads. But they effectually prevented any operations by the rebels outside of the walls of the fort, nor were they able to make even a sortie to check the working-parties of Gillmore. Nor could they even use their battery with effect upon his positions, for the men could not stand to their guns under the fire either of the Monitors or the New Ironsides.

Day by day, and even by night, it was the business of the iron-clads to go up and attack the forts, gradually weakening their defences, till on the day before which they expected to make the final assault, Admiral Dahlgren reported that he knocked the fort into sand-heaps. Under the fire of the land and naval batteries it was no longer tenable, and that night Morris Island was evacuated.

The following communication, from Lieutenant-Colonel D. B. Harris, recommended the evacuation of Morris Island batteries:

OFFICE OF CHIEF-ENGINEER, CHARLESTON, S. C., *August 6, 1863.*

*Brigadier-General THOMAS JORDAN, Chief of Staff.*

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that I visited our works on Morris Island to-day, and in consideration of their condition, of our inability to repair damages at Battery Wagner as heretofore, of the dispirited state of the garrison, and of the progress of the enemy's sap, I am reluctantly constrained to recommend an immediate evacuation of both batteries, Wagner and Gregg.

The thirty-six hours of strict bombardment to which these batteries have been subjected, confining the troops to the shelter of the bomb-proof, has resulted in so dispiriting the garrison at Wagner, as to render it unsafe in the opinion of its chief officers to rely upon it to repel an assault should the enemy attempt one.

The head of the enemy's sap is within forty yards of the salient of the battery, and he is making rapid progress in pushing it forward, unmolested by the fire of a single gun, and with scarcely any annoyance from our sharpshooters.

In consequence of the accuracy of fire of his land-batteries, which are now in close proximity to Battery Wagner, say from five to eight hundred yards, aided by reverse fire from his fleet, it is impossible, in the opinion of the officers of the fort, to keep up a fire either of artillery or small-arms; and the enemy is thus left free to work on his trenches, which he is pushing rapidly forward, the head of his sap being, as above stated, within forty yards of the salient of the work which is so seriously damaged by a battery of Parrotts, kept constantly playing upon it, as to render it untenable. This difficulty could, however, be overcome by the erection of a parapet across the gorge of the salient, and the conversion of the bomb-proof covering into another parapet overlooking the salient, if it were practicable as heretofore to work at night. The covering to the bomb-proof and magazine also need repair. We have been thus far able not only to repair damage at night, but to add from day to day to the strength of the battery, but now that the enemy's sap is in such close proximity to the battery, and he has contrived to throw light upon the parapet at night, it is impossible to do so without a heavy loss of men. In the effort last night to repair damages, the commanding officer of the fort reports a loss, in killed and wounded, of sixty to eighty men of the working-party alone. Without our ability to repair damages at night, the battery will become, under the incessant fire of the enemy's land-batteries and fleet, untenable say in two days.

It is in view of these facts that I have thought it my duty to make the recommendation at the commencement of this report.

I have the honor to be, general, yours, very respectfully,

D. B. HARRIS,

*Lieutenant-Colonel and Chief-Engineer.*

Official: E. KEARNEY, *N. A. A. G.*

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT SOUTH CAROLINA, GEORGIA, AND FLORIDA, }  
CHARLESTON, S. C., August 7, 1863. }

In view of the possibilities that Batteries Wagner and Gregg, which are only outworks, mounting respectively twelve and three guns, might fall under the concentrated fire of the enemy's numerous and powerful land and naval batteries, I determined, immediately after the fall of the south end of Morris Island into the possession of the enemy, to establish a circle of batteries from Legaré's Point, on Schooner Creek, James

Island, to Battery Beauregard, on Sullivan's Island, so as to concentrate their fire (including Forts Sumter and Moultrie) on Morris Island, from about half its length to Cummings's Point, and render that portion of the island untenable to the enemy, should he succeed in driving us away from it. That defensive system is now being carried out to the extent of our available means in labor and heavy ordnance. Many of the long-range guns in Sumter, not absolutely required for its defence, have been removed to arm the new batteries under construction. The remaining guns are being protected with traverses, merlons, and embrasures. The officers' quarters on the gorge of the fort (south face) have been filled up with wet cotton-bags and sand, and a "chemise" of sand-bags is being added to the scarp-wall of the same face, to extend, if practicable, from bottom to top. The defective lines on James Island are also to be shortened by the construction of a new line of redans and redoubts from Secessionville to the Stono River, long since contemplated, but not executed for want of labor.

Herewith are papers, marked A, B, C, D, E, F, connected with the defence of Morris Island during the present attack.

G. T. BEAUREGARD.

Before this, however, and as soon as the iron-clads were within the bar, the harbor of Charleston was effectually closed, so that the contraband commerce of the city was entirely stopped. Gillmore immediately erected batteries on the north end of the island that commanded Sumter with his long-range rifles, and that unexampled bombardment commenced which ended only with the destruction of the fort. The rebels still mounted some guns behind the heaps of ruins, and kept up a show of still holding Sumter, but its power for injury or defence was gone, and with the one exception that the iron-clads were needed in the Gulf for operations against Mobile, all was gained that could have been by the capture of the city, and the Government felt little inclination to risk its vessels by a determined attempt to push the fleet through the new and ever-increasing inner obstructions.

Early in September, and immediately after the evacuation of Morris Island, an attempt was made to capture Sumter by a night expedition from the fleet, consisting of about four hundred men. It was repulsed with a loss of more than one hundred men, principally made prisoners.

On the 5th of October an unsuccessful attempt was made to blow up the *New Ironsides* with a torpedo-boat, called a *David*, a cigar-shaped boat nearly submerged when in motion. It struck the frigate fairly amidships, and exploded about sixty pounds of powder, but with no injurious effect. The frigate escaped the destruction that overtook the *Patapsco* and the *Housatonic*.

The services of this noble ship at Charleston can scarcely be over-estimated. She was fitted for a service which a single Monitor could not so well perform—rapid firing for silencing the guns of a fort. For this purpose no ship in the world carried an armament so powerful as hers, and her commander, J. C. Rowan, his officers and men, were worthy of the noble frigate. An instance of her power, and even of her usual work, is well given by Captain (afterward Commodore) Rowan in the following statement:

The *Weehawken* being hard aground off the pass between Sumter and Cummings's Point, the batteries from Fort Moultrie opened upon her. In obedience to orders, I moved this ship up (casting off the *Memphis*, which was at the time supplying me with shell) and anchored off buoy No. 3, interposing my ship, and completely covering the *Weehawken* from the fire of the enemy. The moment we anchored and commenced swinging head on to Fort Moultrie, the enemy opened a concentrated fire upon us which was terrific. Fortunately, however, we succeeded in getting her port broadside to bear by the time he had gotten our range. We opened slowly at first to get range on Moultrie, when I directed a very spirited and concentrated fire on that fort, which compelled it to slacken. I soon discovered that we suffered severely from their other batteries of 10-inch guns, between Moultrie and Beaufort, when I directed two guns to be opened on each of them. One of the heaviest guns in their works was dismounted, and the fire of the others sensibly slackened. I then directed one gun to continue rapid fire on each of these forts, and directed the remaining fire to open on Moultrie. The fire of all the forts slackened down to an occasional gun, when I directed a slow fire to be kept up to economize shell. The moment the enemy discovered this, he jumped from behind his sandbags and opened rapidly. I renewed our rapid fire, and silenced him again. Having but 30 shells left, I directed the anchor to be weighed, keeping up a well-directed fire from such guns as were not rendered

unavailable in working the cables and anchors, and so withdrew from action (for want of ammunition) without further molestation, after one of the severest artillery duels ever sustained by a ship through a space of two hours and fifty-five minutes.

This account, however, describes only the part taken by one ship in a very remarkable action, in which, besides the *New Ironsides*, six *Monitors* were engaged, and in which one, the *Passaic*, was struck fifty-one times.

The reader would do well to consult, in connection with this chapter, the valuable report of Rear-Admiral Dahlgren on the services of the iron-clads at Charleston. This was published in the first volume, and it contains many interesting details which will serve to complete the account here given. It will be seen that the iron-clads took a very important part even in the reduction of Sumter.

The time between the dismantling of Sumter by General Gillmore's land-batteries and the guns of the iron-clads was spent by the South Atlantic Squadron in a service not much enlivened by any brilliant exploits. It was exhausting by its incessant toil and watchfulness, and wearying by its monotony. There was very little of the exhilaration of battle in a fight between the *Monitors* and the forts. Neither party expected a victory. The hopes which the rebels cherished of speedily destroying the iron-clad turrets, after the repulse under Du Pont, soon died away, and experience taught them not even to expect that a *Monitor* would be disabled by their fire; while the commanders of the iron-clads, having to fight banks of earth and sand only, as their principal work, could hope for little beyond the dismounting of a gun, or the possible blowing up of a magazine. The "turrets" would go up in due time in the morning and commence deliberately a day's work of fighting, secure within their invulnerable iron shield. They stopped at mid-day and went to dinner, and, after a suitable rest, commenced the task of the afternoon, and fought on till the "evening shades appeared," and then retired. Some of those who were not engaged during the day, kept up the picket-watch during the night against blockade-runners and torpedo-boats, and thus the weeks wore on. The presence of the fleet inside the bar destroyed the con-

traband commerce of the city, and every week diminished its importance as a military point for either party. If captured, it opened no way to any thing beyond itself—an inconsiderable city; and if held by the rebels, they gained some moral power from holding secure the spot where the rebellion began; but they held it at the expense of weakening their forces at other more important points. Charleston was surrounded by almost impregnable defences, circle within circle, but they guarded almost literally nothing.

The rebels had no iron-clads in the harbor that could cope with ours, and therefore they made no second raid upon our blockading squadron. Failing, also, to make any serious impression on the Monitors by their artillery, they devoted themselves to the construction of both stationary torpedoes and Davids, or small and nearly submerged steamers, carrying a torpedo. With these they were more successful than with their guns. Some of these infernal machines were by no means safe or pleasant for those who used them, as will appear by the following account given by General Maury, in his report of the defence of Mobile, who narrates the eventful history of a torpedo-boat:

It was built of boiler-iron, was about thirty-five feet long, and was manned by a crew of nine men, eight of whom worked the propeller by hand. The ninth steered the boat, and regulated her movements below the surface of the water. She could be submerged at pleasure to any desired depth, or could be propelled upon the surface. In smooth, still water her movements were exactly controlled, and her speed was about four knots. It was intended that she should approach any vessel lying at anchor, pass under her keel, and drag a floating torpedo, which would explode on striking the side or bottom of the ship attacked. She could remain submerged more than half an hour without inconvenience to her crew.

Soon after her arrival in Charleston, Lieutenant Payne, of the Confederate navy, with eight others, volunteered to attack the Federal fleet with her. While preparing for her expedition, the swell of a passing steamer caused her to sink suddenly, and all hands, except Lieutenant Payne, who at the moment was standing in the open hatchway, perished. She was soon raised and again made ready for service. Lieutenant Payne again volunteered to command her. While lying near Fort Sumter

she capsized, and again sank in deep water, drowning all hands except her commander and two others. Being again raised, and prepared for action, Mr. Aunley, one of the constructors, made an experimental cruise in her in Cooper River. While submerged at a great depth, from some unknown cause, she became unmanageable, and remained for many days on the bottom of the river, with her crew of nine dead men. A fourth time was the boat raised, and Lieutenant Dixon, of Mobile, of the Twenty-first volunteers, with eight others, went out of Charleston Harbor in her, and attacked and sunk the Federal steamer Housatonic. Her mission at last accomplished, she disappeared forever with her crew. Nothing is known of their fate, but it is believed they went down with the enemy.

The destruction of the Housatonic, ~~mentioned in this statement~~, occurred on the 17th of February, 1864, the ship being at the time on blockade duty outside the bar. She was a fine, nearly new screw sloop, of about twelve hundred and fifty tons, burden, and carrying thirteen guns, one of which was an 11-inch Dahlgren pivot-gun, and one a 100-pounder Parrott rifle. She was a valuable vessel, and, in sinking her, the rebels inflicted upon us a serious loss, though their sacrifice of life was greater than ours. It was an attack bravely made, for the crew of the David must have known their peril, and it was well executed, except that they lost their lives, and those, perhaps, they were willing to give in exchange for the destruction of the ship. At a quarter before 9 p. m., the officer of the deck perceived a moving object approaching quite near, and appearing in the dim light like a large plank. Almost at the instant the vessel was struck between the main and mizzen masts, the torpedo exploded, and the vessel began to sink almost immediately. By the boats and with the aid of the Canandaigua the crew and officers were nearly all saved, many having been taken from the rigging after the ship went down.

On the 6th of December, 1863, a short time before the destruction of the Housatonic, a most unexpected and sad accident occurred at Charleston, by which one of our best Monitors, four of her officers, and twenty-seven of her crew, were lost. On that day the Weehawken was lying quietly at anchor within the bar at Charleston, and the rest of the squadron were

at anchor around her. There was a fresh wind, but by no means a gale, and no one on board of any of the vessels there was thinking of danger. The commander of the Monitor, J. M. Duncan, was not on board. Between 1 and 2 P. M. a signal was observed on the Weehawken, asking the commander to come on board. Very soon after a second signal was set—"Assistance wanted"—and in a few minutes after, and before any aid could be given, the stanch iron-clad, that had survived so many fights, and escaped amid great perils, went suddenly down, almost in smooth water, when apparently there was no danger near; so unexpectedly, indeed, that thirty-one of her officers and crew sank with her, and many others with great difficulty made their escape.

The opposers of the new war-ship made a loud outcry, as if no wooden ship had ever been known to founder suddenly. The opinions in regard to the cause of this serious disaster were so various and so conflicting that it is impossible to reach a satisfactory conclusion. No theory fully accounts for all the conceded facts of the case; and it remains unexplained how, in broad daylight, with the ship fully under the observation of her officers, and with nothing occurring to create alarm till too late, the ship could have gone down so quickly that thirty-one should have perished with her.

The rebels were excited to great activity with their torpedoes by the blowing up of the Housatonic, and other attempts were made. Many of these boats were constructed, and their partial success shows how formidable this method of warfare is likely to become hereafter. Early in March, 1864, the Memphis, a steamer of about eight hundred tons, was lying in North Edisto River, when a David was seen at 1 A. M., approaching her very rapidly, about fifty yards distant, coming down with the current. They immediately beat to quarters on the gunboat, and slipped the cable, but almost in an instant the torpedo-boat was under the quarter, where not a gun could be brought to bear. She appeared like a ship's boat bottom up, with what looked like a small hatch in the centre. Into this opening the watch on the deck of the Memphis poured a volley from muskets, pistols, and revolvers, which caused her to drop astern without having struck the ship. In a moment she darted ahead again, and, as



the Memphis at the same moment started her engine, her propeller appeared to disarrange some of the apparatus of the David, which seemed to drift instead of coming on to attack. The Memphis then fired a 12-pounder rifle at her, when she disappeared. Whether she was sunk by the shot, or whether she escaped, was never known. In April a similar attempt was made on the frigate Wabash, then off Charleston Harbor. The torpedo-boat, however, was discovered in season, when distant about one hundred and fifty yards. It was fired upon and disappeared, struck, as was believed, by a round shot. Search was made, but nothing could be found, and the noble frigate escaped unharmed. Such were some of the constant perils of our blockading squadron, of which little was known at the time.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### OPERATIONS IN THE SOUNDS OF NORTH CAROLINA. — ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE IRON-CLAD RAM ALBEMARLE.

As was stated in the first volume, the importance of obtaining possession of the sounds and connecting waters of North Carolina received very early in the war the earnest attention of the Government, and a full description was given of the brilliant though difficult enterprises by which these were brought once more under the full control of the flag of the Union. The Hatteras forts, Roanoke Island, Newbern, Plymouth, and the smaller towns, were speedily captured; an inland commerce very valuable to the rebel cause was entirely destroyed, and a position was gained from which the whole coast of North Carolina could be controlled, and from which also the Southern railroads, and Richmond itself, were threatened. The rebel leaders saw that a severe blow had been given to their cause, and they were watchful for an opportunity of recovering what they had lost. Early in the spring of 1863 it was apparent to watchful observers that the rebels would make a serious attempt to regain possession of the sounds, and it was thought by some that the army was holding too many isolated positions that might be separately attacked. The opinions held at the Navy Department and by its officers on this important point, and the measures which were proposed to avert the danger, are very clearly set forth in the following letters. It is essential to truthful history that these should appear, as many were disposed to think that the Navy Department was responsible for some of the subsequent disasters. Early in April, 1863, Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. Lee, foreseeing danger, addressed the following letter to

Major-General J. G. Foster, then commander of the Department of North Carolina :

U. S. FLAG-SHIP MINNESOTA, OFF NEWPORT NEWS, VA., *April 17, 1863.*

GENERAL: Permit me to renew my previous suggestions in favor of abandoning the occupation of so many points in the sounds, and the razing of the enemy's abandoned defences.

Our present policy of occupying detached posts struck me last fall, and more so now than then, as being expensive, insecure, and subjecting us to attack in detail; whereas, if we occupied one good position, the concentration of our land and naval forces would better enable us to act our part of prosecuting the war. Naval movements necessarily follow army policy in this matter, as we cannot withdraw our assistance whilst you need it in the occupation of a place.

Matters are taking the same critical turn here as in the sounds. The enemy are trying to cut off our positions in detail, and to reoccupy their abandoned works. Our policy of scattered occupation is certainly bad, and cannot be too soon abandoned. . . . .

In June Admiral Lee sent to the Secretary the following information :

U. S. FLAG-SHIP MINNESOTA, OFF NEWPORT NEWS, VA., *June 15, 1863.*

SIR: I enclose herewith a copy of a report dated June 8th, Plymouth, North Carolina, from Lieutenant-Commander C. W. Flusser, commanding United States steamer Miami, respecting a rebel iron-clad battery, now said to be nearly completed on the Roanoke River, above Plymouth. He also sends a plan of the battery, a copy of which plan is enclosed, and gives a statement of its battery and of the steamer detailed to tow it, which is also plated.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, yours,

S. P. LEE, *Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding N. A. B. Squadron.*  
Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

U. S. STEAMER MIAMI, PLYMOUTH, N. C., *June 8, 1863.*

SIR: . . . . . The iron-clad battery above here, on the Roanoke, is built of pine sills fourteen inches square, and is to be plated with railroad iron. The steamer intended to tow her is one hundred and thirty-four feet long, and twenty-four feet beam, with two screws. The boat has six ports, two on each side, and one on either end. She carries a pivot-gun forward, and another aft. Each gun

works out of three ports. The battery carries two guns on each of two opposite faces, and one on each of the two remaining sides.

The boat is built on the plan of the former Merrimack. The roof (slanting) of the battery and all parts exposed are to be covered with five inches of pine, five inches of oak, and then plated with railroad iron. So say the workmen.

We are driving piles in the river, and preparing to receive them. I do not doubt we shall whip them if they venture down.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. W. FLUSSER, *Lieutenant-Commander.*  
*Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. LEE,*  
*commanding N. A. B. Squadron, Hampton Roads, Va.*

U. S. FLAG-STEAMER HETZEL, OFF NEWBERN, N. C., August 8, 1863.

SIR: I called on General Foster, when he came to Fortress Monroe as successor to General Dix, and was informed by him that he had adopted my suggestion contained in our correspondence on file in the Department, to fortify the places he thought proper to hold, and that half the gunboats now in the sounds might be removed, as they were no longer necessary for the defence of the military positions at Newbern, Washington, and Plymouth.

I have just visited the places and their defences. As these towns are now strongly fortified, I propose to withdraw the Commodore Perry, Hunchback, Lockwood, Ceres, and Shawsheen, and to send them to Norfolk and Baltimore for thorough repairs, and, when repaired, to return them here, to constitute, with the Smithfield, Commodore Hull, and Whitehead, the permanent force in the sounds; then to withdraw the Delaware, Louisiana, Valley City, Hetzel, Brinker, and Miami, for repairs and for other duty. Some of these will probably be found to be worn out.

I propose, also, to keep one gunboat at a time at Newbern, Washington, and Plymouth; the others cruising and blockading, especially during the sick-seasons, in the sounds as much as practicable, keeping them away from the towns, out of the rivers, in the sounds, and in the salt air—a course which will promote the health, morals, and duties of the blockade, leaving a force for reliefs, and ready to concentrate at a given point when needed.

It has never been reported that the enemy are building gunboats on the Neuse. The vessel on the stocks at Tarborough, not plated, but probably designed for an iron-clad, together with two small light-draught river steamers, erroneously reported as gunboats, were recently destroyed in a military raid ordered by General Foster.

The iron-clad on the Roanoke, at Edwards's Ferry, forty miles above Rainbow Bluff, heretofore reported to the Department, is considered by Lieutenant-Commander Flusser as a formidable affair, though of light draught. The fortifications at Rainbow Bluff, and the low stage of the water in the river, make it impracticable for the Navy to destroy her before completion, which is reported near. I have made written application to Major-General Peck to send out an expedition to accomplish this desirable object, if practicable. If this is not done, we must have iron-clad defence in the sounds, though I do not see how any iron-clads we have now can be got over the Bulkhead at Hatteras, where the most water is about nine feet in the best tides.

I have the honor to be, respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. P. LEE, *Acting Rear-Admiral, commanding N. A. B. Squadron.*  
Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

In September the Secretary of the Navy addressed the following to the Secretary of War:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *September 17, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to present for your consideration a subject of great importance, connected with the maintaining possession of the sounds of North Carolina.

Information received from time to time places it beyond doubt that the rebels are constructing, and have nearly completed, at Edwards's Ferry, near Weldon, on the Roanoke River, a ram and an iron-clad floating battery. It is represented that these vessels will be completed in the course of four or six weeks. It is further represented that an attack by land and water on Plymouth is contemplated.

Our force of wooden vessels in the sounds, necessarily of light draught and lightly armed, will by no means be adequate to contend against the rebel ram and battery, should they succeed in getting down the Roanoke; and, in that event, our possession of the sounds would be jeopardized.

It is impracticable for our vessels to ascend the Roanoke to any great distance, in consequence of the shallowness of the water, their exposed situation from the fire of sharpshooters, and the earthworks represented to be located at different points, particularly at Rainbow Bluff.

Were our iron-clads, now completed, available for service in the sounds, they could not be sent there, as they draw too much water to cross the Bulkhead at Hatteras. Our light-draught ones will not be completed for some time to come.

In view of all these facts, I deem it proper to suggest the impor-

tance of an effort on the part of the army to surprise and destroy the rebel ram and battery referred to, or of obstructing the river by torpedoes and piles or otherwise, so as to prevent their descent. Permit me to urge some measure of this sort. This Department will be happy to coöperate, so far as it may be able, in adopting such steps as may seem practicable and adequate to secure us against threatening disaster.

I am, very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Hon. E. M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON CITY, *September 19, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 17th instant, in relation to the contemplated attempt of the rebels to take possession of the sounds of North Carolina, and to inform you that a copy of the same has been referred to Major-General Foster, with directions to take such action as may, in his judgment, be best suited to meet the emergency thus presented.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant,

EDWIN M. STANTON, *Secretary of War.*

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

HEADQUARTERS ARMY AND DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA, }  
NEWBURN, N. C., *November 13, 1863.* }

SIR: I recently visited Plymouth, etc., and found Captain Flusser somewhat disturbed by a report which had reached General Wessells, to the effect that Mr. Lynch had been examining the channel of the Roanoke with a view of bringing down the ram.

At frequent intervals since I assumed command in North Carolina, I have posted Major-General Foster in relation to the boat at Edwards's Ferry, and proposed expeditions for the burning of the same; but he never attached great importance to it, and supposed that it was intended only as a defensive agent. He replied that the troops in the department would not warrant the undertaking.

The works at Plymouth have been pushed with all dispatch possible, and I have added materially to the armament. A work is in progress for a 200-pounder Parrott, with a centre pintle, which will make every thing very secure there. While waiting for the 200-pounder, I have ordered up a 100-pounder Parrott from Hatteras, which is the only available gun of the kind in North Carolina.

In regard to the report of an examination of the channel, I think it is accounted for by a number of deserters from Fort Branch, at Rainbow, who state that, week before last, it was examined, and torpe-

does placed at various points below Rainbow Bluff. The difficulties of getting at the boat are greatly increased by the fact that an earthen battery, for four guns, has been constructed at Edwards's Ferry, and is garrisoned by from two hundred to five hundred infantry. The Twentieth North Carolina and one 6-gun battery are at Hamilton. Fort Branch is an enclosed work of twelve rifled guns, including one 64-pounder and three 24-pounders.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. PECK, *Major-General.*

*Acting Rear-Admiral LEE,*

*commanding N. A. B. Squadron, Newport News.*

In view of these dangers the Navy Department was exceedingly anxious to get ready some light-draught iron-clads to meet the emergency ; but although contracts were entered into as soon as possible, after appropriations had been made, none were ready in season. When the disasters came, the disposition to censure the Secretary of the Navy was so strong in some quarters, that a resolution of inquiry was passed ; and an extract from his reply, in connection with the statements already quoted, will make the whole case clear :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, May 9, 1864.

SIR : I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the resolution of the House of Representatives, passed on the 2d instant, directing the Secretary of the Navy to furnish the House "with all the information in his possession concerning the construction of the rebel ram which participated in the recent rebel attack on the United States forces and vessels at and near Plymouth ; also to inform the House why the construction of said ram was not prevented ; whether any steps were taken to prevent the same, or to guard against the action of said ram ; also what action was taken in relation to the subjects of this inquiry, and why the same was not effective."

In conformity with the requirements contained in the foregoing resolution, I transmit herewith copies of correspondence on the files of this Department relative to the construction of the rebel ram referred to, and other matters connected therewith. I also subjoin a schedule of iron-clad gunboats of light draught in the process of construction, which, in anticipation of the state of things which now exists, were designed for service in the sounds and rivers of North Carolina, and the shallow interior waters elsewhere on the coast. These boats were contracted for as soon as it was possible to do so after the necessary appropriations

for their construction were made by Congress, and it will be seen by the data given that most of them were to have been completed last year—some of them as early as September. Not one has yet been delivered, and it will be some weeks before one can be made available for service.

I have felt it my duty on repeated occasions to call the attention of Congress to the necessities for a yard and establishment where iron and armored vessels could be constructed for the Government, but the preliminary steps for such an establishment have not yet been taken. In the mean time the Department and the Government are wholly dependent on contractors, who, if they have the will, do not possess the ability, to furnish these vessels promptly. Conflicting local controversies in regard to the place which shall be selected and benefited by the proposed important national establishment for an iron navy, such as the present and future necessities of the Government require, have contributed to delay action on this important subject. Having in view economy as well as the public necessities, I have at no time recommended that the number of our navy-yards should be increased on the Atlantic coast, but it is my deliberate opinion that no time should be wasted in establishing at a proper place a suitable yard where iron ships can be made and repaired. We feel its necessity in the emergency which has called forth the present inquiry, and not a single contractor is able to meet his engagements, even for one of this class of small vessels. In the event of a foreign war with one or more of the principal maritime powers, our condition would be most unfortunate, with no Government establishment for the construction or repair of armored vessels, such as modern science and skill are introducing.

The omission to make provision for such an establishment, on which the Government can always rely, is to be regretted. Had we such an establishment at this time, I should not have been compelled to make this exhibit of a want of light-draught armored boats for such an exigency as that which now exists in the waters of North Carolina, nor is it probable that the exigency would have occurred. . . . .

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

*Hon. SCHUYLER COLFAX, Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

It will appear from these facts, why the Navy Department had not on hand such vessels as could have successfully met the Albemarle, that was, as the descriptions show, a very powerful iron-clad, which no vessel that could float in those waters



could have captured, except a light-draught Monitor. True, the light-draught Monitors were a failure, through a mistake in construction, still this was the kind of vessel which alone could have answered the purpose.

In April, 1864, the rebels having completed their formidable iron-clad, the Albemarle, were ready to carry out their plan of attack, which was, first to recapture Plymouth by the assistance of the ram, and then send her into the sound to capture or disperse our fleet. On the 18th of April, the rebels, who had collected a force estimated at ten thousand men, around Plymouth, knowing that the iron-clad was ready to come to their assistance, made an advance along their whole line, and commenced the attack, which ended in their regaining possession of Plymouth.

Lieutenant C. W. Flusser was then at Plymouth, with four small gunboats—the Miami, the Southfield, the Ceres, and the Whitehead. With these he expected to meet the Albemarle successfully, which shows how much her power had been underrated. At half-past 9 o'clock in the evening, April 18th, he wrote the following dispatch to Admiral Lee:

We have been fighting here all day. About sunset the enemy made a general advance along the whole line. They have been repulsed. I am fearful our upper fort may be gone, but do not know any thing certain about it. The ram will be down to-night or to-morrow. I fear for the protection of the town. I shall have to abandon my plan of fighting the ram lashed to the Southfield. The army ought to be reënforced at once. I think I have force enough to whip the ram; but not sufficient to assist in holding the town, as I should like.

Six hours after, this gallant officer lay dead on the deck of his ship.

On the 20th of April Major-General Peck sent the following dispatch to General Butler:

The ram has sunk the Southfield and disabled the Miami, and has passed below Plymouth. The sound is probably by this time in possession of the enemy, and Roanoke Island will undoubtedly soon be attacked, if it has not been already. Unless we are immediately and strongly reënforced, both by land and water, all Eastern North Carolina is lost to us.

Such was the condition of affairs at Plymouth when, on the morning of the 19th of April, the *Whitehead*, stationed up the river, reported that the ram was coming down. Between the *Whitehead* and the ram was a rebel battery, so that the position of the gunboat was a very critical one. There was hope that some obstructions placed above would stop the *Albemarle*; but she passed them easily. There was a narrow passage outside the main channel, leading round and to Plymouth. The *Whitehead* ran into this channel, and in the darkness the ram passed her unobserved, and through the narrow "thoroughfare," as it was called; the gunboat went on ahead of the *Albemarle*, which did not attack until about half-past 3 o'clock in the morning. At that time the iron-clad was seen coming on. The *Miami* and the *Southfield* were lashed together, and they were ordered by Commander Flusser to go ahead fast, and meet her. The *Albemarle* came on silently, with her ports closed, as if disdaining to fire a gun. She struck the *Miami* a glancing blow on the port bow, gouging off two planks, ten feet long, but not causing her to leak. Sliding past the *Miami*'s bow, she crushed completely through the side of the *Southfield*, making a wreck of her in a moment, so that she began instantly to sink. As she passed in between the gunboats the forward lashings were broken, and the *Miami* swung round. The after-lashings were then cut; after all who could had left the *Southfield*, the *Miami* retreated down the river, and the *Southfield* sunk. The following account of the death of Lieutenant Flusser is an extract from a letter of the executive officer of the *Miami*, William N. Wells:

As soon as the battery could be brought to bear upon the ram, both steamers, the *Southfield* and *Miami*, commenced firing solid shot from the 100-pound Parrott rifles and 11-inch Dahlgren guns; they making no perceptible indentations in her armor. Commander Flusser fired the first three shots personally from the *Miami*, the third being a 10-second Dahlgren shell, 11-inch. It was directly after that fire that he was killed by pieces of shell; several of the gun's crew were wounded at the same time. Our bow hawser being stranded, the *Miami* swung round to starboard, giving the ram a chance to pierce us. Necessity required the engine to be reversed in motion to straighten the vessel in the river, to prevent going upon the bank of the river, and to bring the rifle-gun

to bear upon the ram. During the time of straightening the steamer the ram had also straightened, and was making for us. From the fatal effects of her prow upon the Southfield, and of our sustaining injury, I deemed it useless to sacrifice the Miami in the same way.

In consequence of our forces being deprived of the assistance of our gunboats, the rebels were enabled to overpower our forces at Plymouth, and it was captured on the 20th of April. As it was expected that the Albemarle would at once enter the sound, and attack our squadron there, such preparations as were possible were at once made to meet her. It should be remembered, in order to judge correctly of the battle which followed, that these vessels carried 9-inch Dahlgren guns and 100-pounder rifles. The following general order of Commodore Smith will fully explain the method of attacking the iron-clad:

U. S. STEAMER MATTABESSETT, ALBEMARLE SOUND, *May 2, 1864.*

The steamers will advance in the third order of steaming, the Miami leading the second line of steamers:

Miami,	Mattabesett,
Ceres,	Sassacus,
Commodore Hull,	Wyalusing,
Seymour,	Whitehead.

The proposed plan of attack will be for the large vessels to pass as close as possible to the ram, without endangering their wheels, delivering their fire, and rounding-to immediately for a second discharge.

The steamer Miami will attack the ram, and endeavor to explode her torpedo at any moment she may have the advantage, or a favorable opportunity. Specific orders cannot be given for the attack, as the manœuvring of the ram cannot be anticipated, and the only order considered necessary is to sink, destroy, or capture by some or all methods here suggested. The stern of the ram is to be fired at by any of the vessels having a heavy gun, taking care not to fire when any of our own vessels are in range. The propeller is to be fouled if possible by lines from the stems of our vessels, or with the fish-nets, as heretofore proposed.

The stack of the ram is supposed to be capped, rendering it impossible to throw powder or shell down; but all vessels having hose should be prepared to lead them up under the cap in the event of getting alongside. The stern and ports are probably the most vulnerable points, and should be assailed by every vessel having an opportunity to.

fire into them. A blow from the ram must be received, if possible, on the bow, and as near the stem as our steering will permit; and if the prod should enter a vessel in that manner, open wide and go ahead to prevent her withdrawing it, when the other vessels will attack the propeller.

Should the thirty armed launches accompany the ram, the small steamers will run them down, using their howitzers with shrapnel on approaching, and hand-grenades when near. Small grapnels should be in readiness to throw at the stack and secure our vessels alongside when other experiments have failed. Ramming may be resorted to; but the peculiar construction of the stems of the double-enders will render this a matter of serious consideration with their commanders, who will be at liberty to use their judgment as to the propriety of this course when a chance shall present itself.

M. SMITH, *Senior Officer.*

Small steamers were stationed at the mouth of the Roanoke as picket-boats, with orders to retreat to the larger vessels when the ram should appear. On the 5th of May the Albemarle made its appearance steaming down the river, and the picket-boats immediately withdrew, the ram pursuing. The alarm was given to the squadron as soon as the distance would admit the use of signals; and the flag-ship Mattabesett, Commander Febiger, the Wyalusing, the Sassacus (double-ender), and the Whitehead got under way, and stood up to engage the iron-clad. The Albemarle was accompanied by the Bombshell, a small steamer which the rebels had captured not long before. At 4.40 P. M., the ram began the battle by a shot at the Mattabesett, which destroyed her launch and wounded several men. The second shot cut away some of the standing and running rigging. By this time the Mattabesett had brought the Bombshell under her broadside, when the little steamer surrendered. The Mattabesett then gave the ram a broadside, at the distance of one hundred and fifty yards, and rounded-to under her stern, coming up on the port side. At this short distance her heavy guns produced no apparent effect upon the armor of the ram, the shot breaking or glancing harmlessly off from her iron side. The muzzle of one of her guns (she carried but two) was, however, knocked off, though it was still used during the remainder of the action. The Sassacus then came gallantly on, delivered her fire in passing, when nearly abreast of the port beam of the Albe-

marle. The ram then attempted to strike the *Sassacus* with her prow; but this was foiled by the superior speed of the double-ender, and the *Sassacus* passed round her bow. At this time the ram had turned partially round, exposing her broadside to the *Sassacus*, when the comparatively frail wooden boat made the dangerous experiment of rushing at her with a full head of steam, in the vain hope of crushing in her side, or of bearing her down until she would sink. The *Sassacus* struck her iron foe fairly, nearly at right angles, and received at the same moment a 100-pounder rifle shot, which went through and through her. The iron-clad received a heavy blow, by which she was careened and borne down till the water washed across the after-deck. The engines of the *Sassacus* were kept going, in the attempt to push the *Albemarle* down, while at the same time many efforts were made to throw hand grenades down her deck-hatch, and powder into her smoke-stack, but without success, as the smoke-stack was capped. In a few moments the ram swung slowly round, and the moment a gun would bear a 100-pounder rifle-shot went crashing through the starboard side of the *Sassacus*, through the coal-bunkers, and into the starboard boiler. In an instant the steam filled the whole ship from the upper deck to the fire-rooms, scalding and suffocating the crew, and rendering all movements for a time impossible. All the firemen were scalded, and one instantly killed. Twenty-one of her crew were scalded or otherwise wounded, and the ship presented a terrible scene of confusion and suffering. The *Sassacus* steamed slowly away from her formidable enemy, and was not subsequently engaged. In the mean time, the other gunboats continued the fight as they could, and the *Miami* made ineffectual efforts to explode against the side of the ram the torpedo which she carried at her bow; but the *Albemarle* was skilfully handled, and avoided the blow. The *Mattabesett* and the small steamer *Commodore Hull* endeavored to foul the propeller of the ram by laying large seines in her track; but the attempt did not succeed, although the nets seemed to encompass the vessel. It is seldom that the superiority of the iron-clad ship has been more clearly seen than in this protracted battle. The *Albemarle* was literally surrounded by wooden gunboats, some of which carried

a very heavy armament. They used their guns at short range, often when almost in contact with her sides. The action continued for about three hours, and until darkness came on. Many men were killed, scalded, and wounded on board our ships; one was completely disabled; but the iron-clad escaped without a serious injury, and, as was stated, without the loss of a man. Our vessels were gallantly and persistently fought; officers and men did all that men could do under such crushing disadvantages; and yet their mailed enemy went back to Plymouth almost unscathed, and ready for another fight. Three of the larger vessels fired at the ram more than two hundred 11-inch shot and shell, and more than one hundred shot and shell from the 100-pounder rifles. This, and the fact that the iron-clad was not disabled, show the resisting power of her armor, and how vain is the expectation that wooden ships can contend, by ramming or otherwise, with a well-constructed armored vessel. The *Sassacus*, as was shown, was disabled, and some twenty of her crew were killed and wounded. The following report of Lieutenant W. W. Queen, commanding the *Wyalusing*, will show the injuries received by a single ship in this encounter; and it must be remembered that the iron-clad which wrought this havoc in the little fleet mounted but two guns:

We received the following damages: one shell exploded in the starboard wheel-house, cutting away two of the outer rims of the starboard wheel and blowing off a portion of the top part of the wheel-house; passing through the aft pilot-house, damaging the steering wheel, breaking the compass, tearing off a portion of the plating, and passing through and through the mainmast about thirty feet above deck; also through the hurricane-deck into the starboard bath-room, and chipping a piece off of the top of the aft howitzer, mounted on the hurricane-deck. The second shot passed between the bottom of the gig and the rail, knocking off all her under planking, carrying away the starboard smoke-stack guy, killing one of the men at the 11-inch gun, tearing away the stanchion supporting the hurricane-deck amidships, then through the engineer's storeroom on the port guard forehead. The third shot came in on the starboard side of the berth-deck, near the dispensary, tearing away ladder, bulkhead; through the port coal-bunkers, passing out of the port side a few feet forward of the boiler. The fourth shot came in on the starboard

quarter about three feet above the water-line, passing through the cabin, destroying mirror, chairs, furniture, etc., etc., bulkhead, companion-way, pantries; striking against a knee in the aft-room. on the port side of wardroom, glancing upward, tearing up the deck planking, starting the water-ways, and breaking away two of the starts for the breechings, landing on deck; this proved to be a 100-pound Whitworth solid rifle-shot. The fifth passed over the quarter-deck in a parallel line with the pivot-gun, passing through one of the port-shutters. Pieces of exploded shell cut away one of the shrouds of the main rigging; also the brails, passing through the mainsail.

Thus ended a fight remarkable for unavailing courage; and proving conclusively, as some other battles also did, that the era of wooden ships as engines for fighting had passed away.

The ram appeared again, on the 24th of May, at the mouth of the Roanoke; but apparently, from her movements, fearing torpedoes, soon returned up the river, without entering the sound. On the 25th of May a party of five men left the Wyandling in an open boat, provided with a torpedo, with which they hoped to blow up the Albemarle, as she lay at Plymouth. They carried their apparatus across the island swamps on a stretcher, and then two swam across the Roanoke above Plymouth, carrying a line, with which they hauled the torpedoes over to the Plymouth shore. They then connected them with a suitable "bridle," and intended to float them down, so that one should strike on each side of the iron-clad. The man who guided them was discovered, and the plan failed. The ram was still safe and formidable as ever.

Lines of torpedoes were placed at the mouth of the Roanoke, in order to deter the Albemarle from coming down, or destroy her should she make the attempt. As these preparations were well known to the rebels, it is quite likely that they were unwilling to risk their vessel. For some reason she lay quietly at Plymouth until the last of October, when Lieutenant Cushing undertook to destroy her. Great precautions had been taken to render her secure. At the wharf where she lay, there was a guard of soldiers, in addition to her crew, and a fire was kept burning ashore, in order to prevent the approach of any enemy unseen. She was surrounded by large logs, which formed a "water-fence" around her some thirty feet from her

hull, designed to keep off any boat that might approach her with a torpedo—a method of attack which they evidently feared, and, so far as possible, had provided against. From the mouth of the Roanoke to where the Albemarle lay is about eight miles, the stream being about two hundred yards wide, and lined with the enemy's pickets. About one mile below Plymouth was the wreck of the Southfield, sunk by the ram in the night action before Plymouth. At this wreck were several schooners, making a picket-station.

It seemed next to an impossible thing for a boat to pass all these without being seen, and approach the ram so as to make a successful attack. Lieutenant W. B. Cushing, then only twenty-one years of age, who had before distinguished himself by bravery bordering sometimes on rashness, and by an irrepressible love of perilous enterprise, sought and obtained permission to attempt to blow up this formidable vessel with a torpedo. He prepared a steam-launch, which was manned by thirteen officers and men, partly volunteers. The spirit of the men of this squadron is well shown by the fact that some sailors tried to purchase the privilege of going on this dangerous errand by offering a month's pay to those who had been selected. A cutter from one of the vessels was taken in tow, with the intention of casting it off in passing the Southfield, and capturing the guard if they were hailed. On the night of the 27th of October the little expedition started in its pigmy steamer to seek the terror of the sounds. They passed the lines of pickets on the banks of the river without being discovered, and glided quietly past the Southfield without being seen, though they were only twenty yards away, and were not perceived by any one till they were hailed by the lookouts on the Albemarle. The light on the shore revealed to the bold company the iron-clad, moored to the wharf within her log-built defences, so that they could see where to aim the blow.

The alarm-rattles were sprung on the deck of the ram, her bell was violently rung, her gunners sprang to quarters, and a fire of musketry was opened on the launch, that seemed, as they said, to fill the air with bullets. The launch passed close to the Albemarle and ahead, then turned, and with a full head of steam dashed straight on. A charge of canister from the how-



itzer was poured into the rebel when a few yards from her, and the launch gained thus a moment's time. She struck the logs, pressed them inward several feet, while the rebels were training one of their heavy guns upon them. The boom holding the torpedo was quickly lowered, driven under her overhang, and then the flash and roar of the torpedo and the rebel gun mingled, and at the same instant the launch was shattered, her crew killed, wounded, or in the water, and the dreaded Albemarle, with a gaping death-wound in her side, was going to the bottom.

Lieutenant Cushing, and others who were able, swam to the middle of the river, but most of the party were killed, captured, or drowned, and only one, besides their young commander, escaped. He found himself alone in the water, drifting down, not daring to land. Half a mile below the town he met one of his companions nearly exhausted, and strove in vain to enable him to reach the shore. He himself, completely exhausted when he reached the bank, was too weak to crawl out of the water, and lay there half submerged until near daylight, when he crept out, and into a swamp near the fort below the town. While he lay there concealed by the bushes, a few feet from a footpath, two of the Albemarle's officers passed along, and from their conversation he concluded that the ram was destroyed.

After travelling several hours, through the mud and thickets of the swamp, he came out some distance below the town, and there found one of that race who, under all circumstances, could be trusted by our Union soldiers and sailors, and who, even when without arms, were a supporting host to our cause. Him Cushing sent back for information, and waited until he returned with the statement that the Albemarle was really sunk, and then the young officer felt amply rewarded for the danger and fatigue. The gallant exploit had secured to us again the possession of the sounds and the towns upon their shores.

Travelling on through another swamp, he found and captured a skiff belonging to one of the rebel pickets, and in this, about eleven o'clock the next night, he reached the steamer Valley City. This act of Cushing and his brave associates has not so many parallels in the history of war as to place it among ordinary events. The probabilities were very heavily against

success, and there was scarcely a possibility that they could escape with their lives, even if they should reach the side of the iron-clad. It was very different from the attacks by torpedoes upon our own ships. They were easily approached when lying in or off a harbor in the darkness. The *David* was seen but an instant, and then disappeared. Here the steam-launch passed up a narrow stream eight miles, between lines of what should have been watchful pickets, past a picket-station in the river, and then rounded-to in full view, and under a heavy fire of musketry, ran to the very muzzle of the heavy gun of the *Ram*, through, or over her log breast-work, and fired her torpedo in the very blaze of her cannon.

The sinking of this ship very nearly completed the destruction of the rebel iron-clad navy. The *Merrimack*, the *Arkansas*, the *Louisiana*, the *Mississippi*, the *Manassas*, the *Atlanta*, and the *Tennessee*, had all been captured, sunk, or blown up, having done little damage beyond that inflicted by the *Merrimack*. She, indeed, during her first day's career, wrought frightful havoc; but the rest, though really very formidable ships, accomplished almost nothing compared with what seemed to be reasonable expectations.

It is useless, perhaps, to inquire what the *Tennessee* would have done at Mobile, had there been no *Monitor* present; but the fact that she spread ruin around her somewhat thickly until struck by the shot of the *Monitors*, indicates what might have come. But He who watched over our fleets and armies, and interposed so often, almost visibly, in our behalf, so ordered events as to cut short the career of the rebel navy, and thus not only broke what would have been, if successful, a right arm of power for the rebel government, but might have procured for it recognition from England and France.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

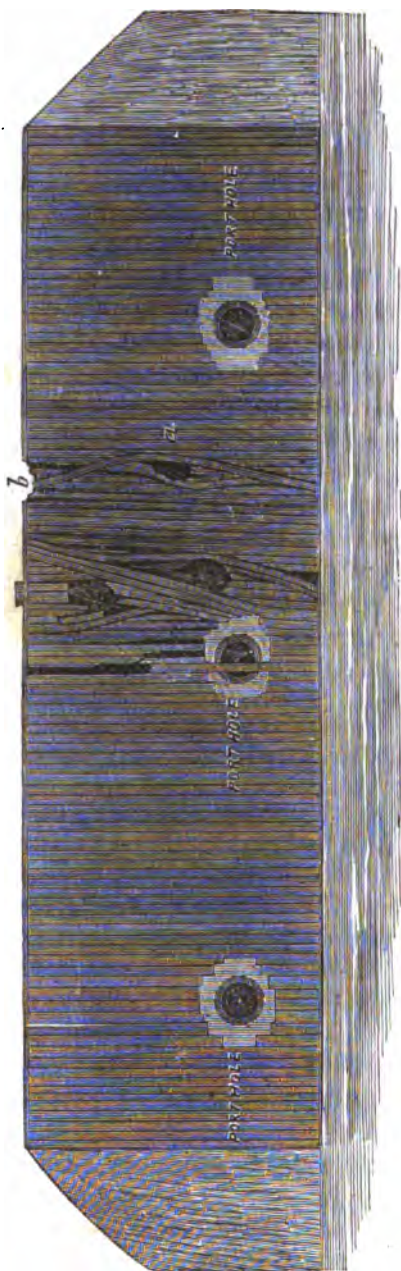
### THE RED RIVER EXPEDITION, IN CONNECTION WITH THE ARMY UNDER GENERAL BANKS.

IN the winter of 1863, and early in the spring of 1864, considerable bodies of rebel troops were collected at different points in Northwestern Louisiana, especially along the Red River and its tributaries. Fort De Russy had been reoccupied by them, and made stronger than it was at first. There were some indications that the rebels might concentrate their forces west of the Mississippi, and make a demonstration, possibly, against important points on the river, and perhaps might attack New Orleans, or unite this Western army with that of the East. It was thought prudent to anticipate them in their movements whatever they might intend, and a joint expedition of the army and navy was organized in March, with the intention of ascending Red River as far as Shreveport. Perhaps this should be presented as conjecture only—so little *apparent* reason existed for this unfortunate expedition as to lead to the belief that its real purpose has not yet been disclosed. The fact that there was much cotton in the Red River country probably originated the slander that commercial and military interests were mysteriously united in the movement.

Lieutenant S. L. Phelps, with the Eastman, the Lafayette, Choctaw, Osage, Neosho, Ozark, Fort Hindman, and Cricket, went up the Red River in advance of the rest of the expedition until they reached the obstructions which the rebels had placed in the river below Fort De Russy. Owing to the difficulties of navigation with the long gunboats, it took two days to reach that point. The obstructions were quite formidable; and had

there been any flanking batteries, the removal of them would have been quite difficult and perilous. "The obstructions consisted of piles driven across the river, supported by a second tier of shorter ones, on which rested braces and ties from the upper ones. Immediately below these was a raft of timber well secured across the river, and made of logs which do not float. Finally, a forest of trees had been cut and floated down upon the piles from above. The river had broken through these obstructions, and had partially undermined the rifle-pits on the right bank. The Fort Hindman removed a portion of the raft, when the Eastman ran up, and by both pulling and ramming, broke out the piles and framework still obstructing the passage of the vessels. This work consumed nearly the entire day." Passing through the obstructions, the gunboats hastened on to the fort. Firing from musketry and artillery was heard as they approached, and when one shell from a 100-pounder rifle had been fired, a white flag was raised on the fort. General Smith's division had arrived from Simmsville, and had assaulted and carried the rear works, while the water-battery was rendered untenable by the presence of the gunboats. Eight heavy guns, two field-pieces, and one hundred and eighty-five prisoners, were captured with the fort. The gunboats then pushed on as rapidly as possible to Alexandria, but failed to reach the town in season to capture five steamers which succeeded in getting over the falls, and made their escape up the river. At Alexandria they were to meet the troops of General Banks on the 17th of March, but for some reason the army was delayed. While at Alexandria an experiment was made with the rifled guns of the Essex upon a casemate of a battery doubly plated with railroad iron. It was one of the strongest works, said Admiral Porter, ever built of earth and iron. The effect of the shot is shown by the diagram.

On the 29th of March Admiral Porter informed the Secretary that he was at length ready to move on from Alexandria. Great difficulty was found in getting some of the larger gunboats, especially the Eastport, over the falls, or rather rapids, at that point. It was necessary to drag her over the rocks, and it took two days and a half to get her where she could go forward by her machinery alone. A part of the squadron was left be-



#### CASEMATED BATTERY.

Doubly plated with railroad iron, at the bend near Fort De Russy, Red River, Louisiana, showing effects of one shell and three solid shot fired from a 100-pounder Parrott rifle on board the United States steamer Essex, at the distance of about 550 yards, March 16, 1864.

A percussion shell was the first one fired, striking the point marked *a*, and tearing out the iron over a surface twelve inches long (vertically) by eight inches wide. Four solid shot succeeded: two of them struck full and fair within six feet of the hole made by the shell, one struck the crest at *b*, and one struck the talus of the escarp just below the berm and beneath the middle port-hole. The solid shot broke, shattered and drove in the iron, and made holes in the heavy oak backing from eighteen to thirty inches long, by eight to eleven inches wide, and buried themselves deeply, the butt of one being two feet below the exterior surface.

low, for the purpose of guarding the river. The vessels sent on above the falls were the Cricket, Eastport, Mound City, Chilli-cothe, Carondelet, Pittsburg, Ozark, Neosho, Osage, Lexington, Louisville, and Fort Hindman, and thirty army transports. This fleet reached Grand Ecore, far up the Red River, in safety. When the squadron reached Grand Ecore, the army was at Natchitoches. Admiral Porter deemed it prudent to leave all but six of the gunboats, expecting that the remainder would follow him when the usual rise in the river should come. With the six which he selected, and with twenty army transports, he started for Shreveport on the 7th of April, expecting to reach Springfield on the third day, and to join the army there. The difficulties of navigation were very great; but the vessels reached the spot on the third day, without a serious accident. Here they found that the rebels had sunk a large steamer directly across the river, which here was so narrow that the sunken steamer reached from bank to bank. This was the extreme point touched by the expedition.

While Admiral Porter was preparing to remove this hulk, a courier reached him from General Banks, and informed him that the army had been repulsed, and was falling back to Pleasant Hill, a point some sixty miles below where the fleet was. Few men have ever been placed in a more trying and dangerous position than Admiral Porter was by this most unexpected repulse and retreat. The finest vessels of the Mississippi squadron were far up the Red River, and above the falls at Alexandria, and the water in the river was falling, instead of rising, as was expected, and as was usual at that season of the year. Six of these were now sixty miles at least from the retreating army, in a narrow, crooked river, filled with sand-bars, logs, and snags, and impediments of all kinds, while the region round, on either bank, was full of soldiers who had retreated before the advance of our army, and who, now that our forces were repulsed, would of course swarm on the river-banks to intercept and destroy the gunboats. These rebel soldiers and the hostile population gathered at once to attack the fleet. Fortunately, several of the six boats were iron-clads, and afforded protection to their crews. But from either shore, the banks being high, they could fire with rifles and musketry down on the decks

of the boats, and almost with impunity. It was an exceedingly dangerous, annoying, and almost continuous attack. The retreating boats could only make about thirty miles a day, and the rebel force could march from point to point, and be ready to meet the fleet at every available spot.

There was a body of about two thousand cavalry and several pieces of artillery that thus followed, accompanying the boats, and firing on them at every place where they could do it, and shelter themselves from the steamers' guns. The gunboats, however, taught them prudence, and after a few experiments, they were somewhat cautious. Of course they could frequently avail themselves of an ambush from which they would fire, and then escape to shelter, but were not often eager to come within range of the heavy guns.

On the 12th of April was fought a very curious battle; and but for the useless slaughter, and the almost savage exhibition of ignorance and passion, it might have been regarded as an amusing scene. The Monitor Osage had run aground, and a transport, the Black Hawk, was endeavoring to pull her off, while the Lexington iron-clad was lying near. At this time a large body of rebels came up, fresh from the repulse of Banks's army, exultant at their success, and maddened to fury with liquor. They saw the iron-clad aground, and feeling then that they could whip the "Yankees" under any circumstances, they determined to storm a Monitor and an iron-clad gunboat, though impassable water lay between. With yells, which were the usual "war-whoops" of the rebel armies, and whose *unhuman* tones no savage could equal, they rushed to the bank, right before the guns of the Monitor, and opened fire with two thousand muskets. They drove all out of the wooden transport at once; but the next moment the grape and canister from the big guns swept their ranks away. With oaths, and hootings, and screams of madness, they re-formed, and rushed again to the bank, only to be mown down again; and still they yelled and fought, the ground strewn with their dead and wounded. The Lexington shifted her position a little, and then opened a cross-fire upon the insane crowd. They brought up two pieces of artillery, one of which the Lexington instantly dismounted by a shot, and the other was dragged off.

Thus furiously, for two hours, these senseless rebels fought with muskets a Monitor and an iron-clad gunboat, when even partial success was an impossible thing; the officers, crazy as their men, urging them on with frantic gestures, yells, and oaths—their commanding officer, a general, as was said, having his own head taken off by a shell. The space of a mile, over which the somewhat sobered crowd retreated, was covered with dead, wounded, and all the various wreck of battle. A body of five thousand men, as was reported, who were marching to the river, with the intention of cutting off the gunboats, having heard of the disastrous result of this attack, turned back, and abandoned their plan. Soon after, General Banks sent up some troops to keep back the guerillas from the river, and the little fleet reached Alexandria without further serious embarrassment.

When Admiral Porter reached Alexandria, he found two of the gunboats he had left behind him above the bar, with no prospect of getting down until there should be a rise in the river, while there was not water enough to allow those which had been up to Grand Ecore to pass down again; and the river falling, though slowly. The rebels were by no means inactive. Among other devices, they busied themselves in turning streams, emptying into the Red River, in another direction, where this could be done; and thus they lessened somewhat the chances of escape for the fleet. In fact, the gunboats were in a trap, from which it seemed impossible for human skill to extricate them, without a rise in the river, of which there was no present prospect.

At this time the squadron met with an unexpected disaster. The rebels resorted, as in other places, to the use of torpedoes; and succeeded in exploding one under the bow of the Eastport, by which she was sunk between Grand Ecore and Alexandria. Being extremely unwilling to lose so fine a steamer, they went down to Alexandria, and took up the steam-pump boats, in the hope of raising her; and getting her down to a place of safety.

After his arrival at Alexandria, Admiral Porter found himself in a most embarrassing and perilous position. Several of his best vessels were above the falls, and the river still falling; an unusual thing, for the other Western rivers near were full,



and it was the season for high water. Eight of his iron-clads, three or four gunboats, and many transports were cut off from communication with the Mississippi, in a narrow river, both banks of which swarmed with hostile troops, who had not only muskets but artillery at command. The nature of this peril may be seen by the following occurrence: Early in May, the steamers Covington and Liquot (armed) started from Alexandria to convoy down the river the transport Warner with troops. They were attacked by the rebel batteries and some five thousand infantry, and, after a fight of about five hours, the vessels were all badly cut up, more than one hundred were killed and wounded aboard the transport; all three of the boats were captured, though the Covington was left on fire by what remained of her crew, who started through the woods for Alexandria. Of fourteen officers and sixty-two men, only nine officers and twenty-three men were left. Such battles show the perilous position of our fleet in the crooked and narrow river, so far from the Mississippi.

At this time the water had fallen so low in the Red River that it seemed impossible to rescue the vessels; and as the army was so short, both of provisions and forage, that it would be compelled to move in a few days, Porter saw nothing before him better than the destruction of his vessels, composing the best part of the Mississippi squadron.

Fruitful as the admiral was in resources, and with courage and energy undiminished, he had been placed at length in a position from which he saw no way to extricate himself or his men—unless, indeed, he should desert his fleet, and with his sailors retreat with the army.

He had this to console him—he was in this desperate case by no fault of his own. He had accompanied the army, and had done all that brave men could perform, pushing his fleet successfully until the army was repulsed and retreated. In this his extremity, Admiral Porter was relieved in a manner so remarkable as to cause him very properly to recognize in it a "special providence." He says, "There seems to have been a special providence looking out for us in providing a man equal to the emergency." That man was Lieutenant-Colonel Bailey, acting engineer of the Nineteenth army corps. He conceived,

what seemed to most, the impossible plan of building a dam across the rocks at the falls, so as to raise the water high enough to permit the vessels to pass over the rocks in safety. The best engineers, it is said, treated the proposition only with ridicule. But Colonel Bailey was so confident of success, that he convinced first the admiral, and then General Banks, of the possibility of the plan, and Banks placed at his disposal the force he required, some three thousand men and three hundred wagons. The steam-mills and buildings in the neighborhood were torn down to obtain material; two or three regiments of Maine lumbermen were sent into the forest to fell trees, and soon the crash of their falling was heard on all sides; teams were moving in all directions, and bringing brick and stone; quarries were opened, flatboats were built to transport stone, and the men worked with vigor and a will.

Porter's description of this, written under the excitement of the moment, is perhaps the most graphic yet given to the public, and is valuable as the testimony of an eye-witness to a most extraordinary scene. The earnest praise which he bestowed upon Colonel Bailey shows how deeply he was moved by this rescue of his fleet, and he felt and expressed his great obligations to all who so nobly aided him in his hour of danger:

These falls are about a mile in length, filled with rugged rocks, over which, at the present stage of water, it seemed to be impossible to make a channel. The work was commenced by running out from the left bank of the river a tree dam, made of the bodies of very large trees, brush, brick, and stone, cross-tied with other heavy timber, and strengthened in every way which ingenuity could devise. This was run out about three hundred feet into the river; four large coal-barges were then filled with brick and sunk at the end of it. From the right bank of the river cribs filled with stone were built out to meet the barges. All of which was successfully accomplished, notwithstanding there was a current running of nine miles an hour, which threatened to sweep every thing before it.

It will take too much time to enter into the details of this truly wonderful work. Suffice it to say, that the dam had nearly reached completion in eight days' working-time, and the water had risen sufficiently on the upper falls to allow the Fort Hindman, Osage, and Neosho to get down and be ready to pass the dam. In another day it

would have been high enough to enable all the other vessels to pass the upper falls. Unfortunately, on the morning of the 9th instant, the pressure of water became so great that it swept away two of the stone barges, which swung in below the dam on one side. Seeing this unfortunate accident, I jumped on a horse and rode up to where the upper vessels were anchored, and ordered the Lexington to pass the upper falls, if possible, and immediately attempt to go through the dam. I thought I might be able to save the four vessels below, not knowing whether the persons employed on the work would ever have the heart to renew their enterprise.

The Lexington succeeded in getting over the upper falls just in time, the water rapidly falling as she was passing over. She then steered directly for the opening in the dam, through which the water was rushing so furiously that it seemed as if nothing but destruction awaited her. Thousands of beating hearts looked on anxious for the result. The silence was so great as the Lexington approached the dam that a pin might almost be heard to fall. She entered the gap with a full head of steam on, pitched down the roaring torrent, made two or three spasmodic rolls, hung for a moment on the rocks below, was then swept into deep water by the current, and rounded to safely into the bank. Thirty thousand voices rose in one deafening cheer, and universal joy seemed to pervade the face of every man present.

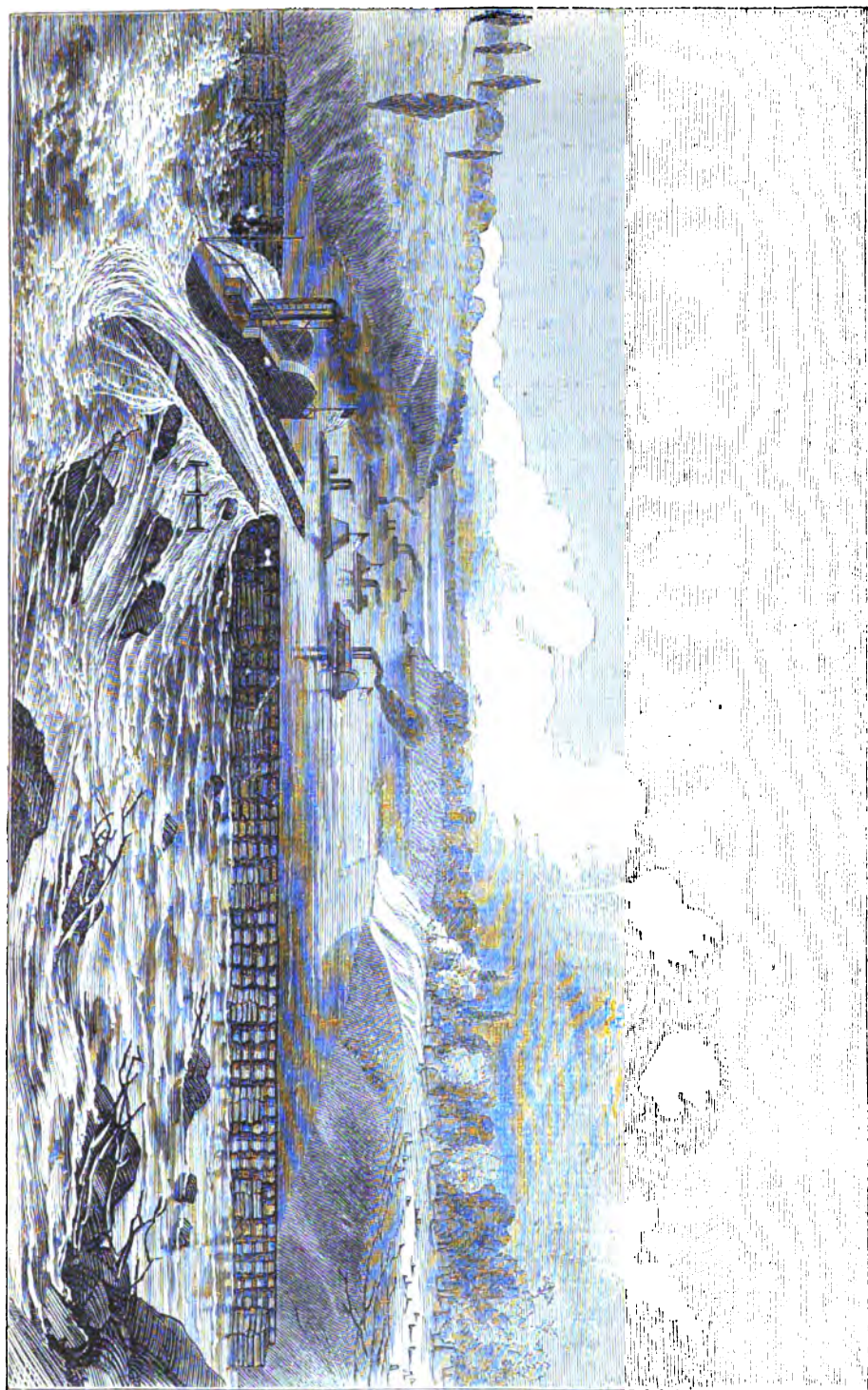
The Neosho followed next; all her hatches battened down, and every precaution taken against accident. She did not fare as well as the Lexington, her pilot having become frightened as he approached the abyss and stopped her engine, when I particularly ordered a full head of steam to be carried; the result was that for a moment her hull disappeared from sight under the water. Every one thought she was lost. She rose, however, swept along over the rocks with the current, and fortunately escaped with only one hole in her bottom, which was stopped in the course of an hour.

The Hindman and Osage both came through beautifully, without touching a thing, and I thought if I was only fortunate enough to get my large vessels as well over the falls, my fleet once more would do good service on the Mississippi.

The accident to the dam, instead of disheartening Colonel Bailey, only induced him to renew his exertions, after he had seen the success of getting four vessels through.

The noble-hearted soldiers, seeing their labor of the last eight days swept away in a moment, cheerfully went to work to repair damages, being confident now that all the gunboats would be finally brought over.

DAM ACROSS THE RED RIVER, CONSTRUCTED BY COL. BAILEY.



These men had been working for eight days and nights up to their necks in water in the broiling sun, cutting trees and wheeling bricks, and nothing but good-humor prevailed among them. On the whole, it was very fortunate the dam was carried away, as the two barges that were swept away from the centre swung round against some rocks on the left, and made a fine cushion for the vessels, and prevented them, as it afterward appeared, from running on certain destruction.

The force of the water and the current being too great to construct a continuous dam of six hundred feet across the river in so short a time, Colonel Bailey determined to leave a gap of fifty-five feet in the dam, and build a series of wing dams on the upper falls. This was accomplished in three days' time; and on the 11th instant the Mound City, Carondelet, and Pittsburg came over the upper falls, a good deal of labor having been expended in hauling them through, the channel being very crooked, scarcely wide enough for them. Next day the Ozark, Louisville, Chillicothe, and two tugs also succeeded in crossing the upper falls. Immediately afterward the Mound City, Carondelet, and Pittsburg started in succession to pass the dam, all their hatches battened down and every precaution taken to prevent accident. The passage of these vessels was a most beautiful sight, only to be realized when seen. They passed over without an accident except the unshipping of one or two rudders. This was witnessed by all the troops, and the vessels were heartily cheered when they passed over. Next morning at 10 o'clock the Louisville, Chillicothe, Ozark, and two tugs passed over without any accident except the loss of a man, who was swept off the deck of one of the tugs. By 3 o'clock that afternoon the vessels were all coaled, ammunition replaced, and all steamed down the river, with the convoy of transports in company. A good deal of difficulty was anticipated in getting over the bars in lower Red River; depth of water reported only five feet; gunboats were drawing six. Providentially, we had a rise from the back-water of the Mississippi, that river being very high at that time; the back-water extending to Alexandria, one hundred and fifty miles distant, enabling us to pass all the bars and obstructions with safety.

Words are inadequate to express the admiration I feel for the abilities of Lieutenant-Colonel Bailey. This is, without doubt, the best engineering feat ever performed. Under the best circumstances, a private company would not have completed this work under one year, and to an ordinary mind the whole thing would have appeared an utter impossibility. Leaving out his abilities as an engineer, and the credit he has conferred upon the country, he has saved to the Union a valuable fleet,

worth nearly two million dollars. More, he has deprived the enemy of a triumph which would have emboldened them to carry on this war a year or two longer; for the intended departure of the army was a fixed fact, and there was nothing left for me to do, in case that event occurred, but to destroy every part of the vessels, so that the rebels could make nothing of them. The highest honors the Government can bestow on Colonel Bailey can never repay him for the service he has rendered the country.

Thus ended an expedition, which, for romantic adventure, unusual perils, heroic courage, and severe fighting on the part of the Navy, has no parallel in the events of the war. It is not the intention to state that there was not as much heroism, and endurance, and stern battle in other places—our sailors were not found wanting anywhere—but there were peculiar dangers up the Red River which were not elsewhere encountered. Perhaps the ready resource, the inventive genius, and the mechanical skill of the American sailors and soldiers were never more nobly exhibited.

The remainder of the season of 1864, on the Western rivers, was not distinguished by any such operations as fix strongly the public attention, and yet severe labor was constantly performed, and battles on a small scale were almost daily fought, as the rivers were constantly patrolled in the presence of a watchful enemy. This enemy was met on the Mississippi, the Ohio, the Cumberland, the Tennessee, and, in fact, in every place where a gunboat could float. The same is also true of the Potomac flotilla. It is difficult to exhibit its apparently small enterprises so as to give them their proper place in history. The daily details appear of little importance, and become wearisome by repetition; and yet the officers and men engaged were worthy of peculiar praise for performing so well a dangerous task with so few thanks, and so little reward, whether of glory or money. The public mind turns ever to the grander exploits of the war.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### OPERATIONS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC SQUADRON ON THE JAMES AND YORK RIVERS, AND ADJACENT WATERS.—REBEL ATTACK ON SUFFOLK.

It is a very difficult task to present in a proper light the work performed by the Navy in the waters of Virginia. An attempt was made in the first volume to present in part the operations upon the Potomac. It was not easy to excite much interest in a work which in general was so monotonous, and so little relieved by dazzling exploit: and yet it could not be passed over, for that would be unjust to the brave men by whom it was performed; and besides, its results were very important to the country. The same may be truly said of the operations of the northern portion of the North Atlantic Squadron, on the James and York Rivers, and the connected waters. With the single exception of the affair with the Merrimack, no important battles were fought, nothing was done which startled or thrilled the country, like the events on the southern coast, and on the Western rivers; and yet from the first the security of the capital, and then the operations and final safety of the Army of the Potomac, up to the time of the abandonment of the campaign of the Peninsula, depended largely upon the active and untiring labors and support of the Navy. Without this Washington would have been completely cut off from communication with the North in the first months of the war; and without the assistance of the Navy on a large scale the grand Army of the Potomac could not have been moved from Washington to the Peninsula, nor could it have been rescued from destruction after the failure of McClellan.

But these results were reached only by labor, and skill, and courage, and exposure, and endurance of peril and fatigue, of which the country has known little or nothing, because naturally the attention was fixed upon the more prominent, more public, and grander movements of the Army. The magnificent spectacle of the great army before Richmond; the bloody battles, bravely but uselessly fought; the memorable retreat: these the people were made to understand by almost countless descriptions; but few thought to inquire how that army reached its position there; how with its immense artillery-trains, its ammunition, its various stores, and its multitude of animals, it was taken up, protected on its passage, and set safely down on the Yorktown peninsula. Few inquired how its lines of communication with Washington were preserved, or how its numerous depots of stores were protected, so that neither food, nor ammunition, nor clothing, nor medicine, should fail for all that host. Fewer still, probably, understood how that army escaped, when, baffled at length, it retreated from Richmond.

The mere transportation was, of course, mainly effected by the unarmed light steamers chartered by the War Department; but unless our gunboats had afforded these constant and powerful protection, the Army could neither have been moved, nor removed, nor furnished with daily supplies. The little black gunboats on the river might scarcely be noticed amid the more glittering pageants of the war; and yet, were it not for their far-reaching guns, those accumulated stores on which the great host depends would be in constant danger, and every bluff and point would bristle with batteries, that would cut off all communication with the Army, and reduce it to helplessness.

These duties of convoying, guarding communications, and protecting supplies for the Army of the Potomac, in addition to the more brilliant operations in the sounds of North Carolina, the North Atlantic Squadron patiently performed, first under the command of Rear-Admiral L. M. Goldsborough, and then under acting Rear-Admiral S. P. Lee. A few only of the more important events can be noticed here, enough merely to indicate the nature of the service which the Navy performed in connection with the Army of the Potomac.

Immediately after the evacuation of Yorktown, in the early



part of May, 1862, McClellan sent forward General Franklin's division on transports to West Point, at or near the head of navigation on York River, for the purpose of intercepting, if possible, the retreat of the rebel troops from Yorktown. He reached West Point, and landed only to be attacked by a force so large that he telegraphed to the gunboats then in the river for assistance, as he needed immediate support. The gunboats answered the summons, and getting into position, opened their broadsides with such effect, that the enemy's fire was silenced, and his forces driven off in about three-quarters of an hour. Their fire was at once very accurate and destructive, and the gunboats, as on several occasions, both on the Western and Eastern rivers, saved the land forces from disaster.

When McClellan's base was at the White House, his lines of water communication were guarded and kept open by our gunboats; and when he changed his base, and sent his transports, after the destruction of his stores, round to Harrison's Landing, on the James River, still the safety of the Army depended upon the Navy, for without our armed vessels the rebels would have destroyed his transports and his stores, and would, moreover, have blockaded the river with their batteries. Wherever the gunboats lay, the rebels were taught, by dear experience, not to come within reach of their enormous guns. When McClellan retreated and fought the battle of Malvern Hill, the gunboats made fearful havoc in the rebel ranks; and then they saved his transports from pursuit by the rebel steamers, which, but for the presence of our ships, would have dashed down upon them from Richmond.

These things are not mentioned here because they were brilliant exploits, or because there was any thing unusual in such operations, or because they were not precisely what the Navy was expected to do; but merely to show that the Department and its officers were properly performing their part in the great conflict, and that, although scarcely noticed by the country amid the more imposing movements of the large armies, it yet formed a very important feature of the war.

Doubtless serious mistakes were sometimes made by the officers of the Navy, as well as by those of the Army. If, immediately after the destruction of the Merrimack, our fleet on

the James River had been pushed past the batteries and through or over the obstructions, Richmond must have fallen then. But a little delay gave the rebels time to strengthen and multiply defences, until the passage was impossible. In the opinion of good officers, if the Monitor and Galena, instead of stopping to engage Fort Darling, had gone forward beyond the fort, turning away or running down the obstructions, Richmond would have been taken. Some officers, wedded to and shackled by the old idea of leaving nothing unsubdued in the rear, never succeeded in leaving any thing behind them.

In the spring of 1863, our forces were in possession of Norfolk and Suffolk, and our vessels controlled the North Carolina sounds, and held, with the land forces, Newbern, Plymouth, and other important points on those waters. The rebels evidently expected an attack upon Richmond from the south, and they were therefore exceedingly anxious to recover some of the important ground which in this quarter they had lost. Among other projects they made a strong demonstration against Suffolk, then held by a body of troops under Major-General Peck. The following letter of Acting Rear-Admiral S. P. Lee explains the condition of affairs :

FLAG-SHIP MALVERN, HAMPTON ROADS, VA., *July 17, 1864.*

SIR : I enclose the report of Captain Smith, dated 15th instant: (1) of the attack on the Pequot and Commodore Morris by a rebel battery near Malvern Hill, with its enclosures; (2) report of Lieutenant-Commander Quackenbush, Pequot; (3) of Acting Master Lee, Commodore Morris, both dated 15th instant. From the former it appears that at 1.10 P. M. on the 14th a battery of one gun opened on the Pequot from Malvern Hill, the first shot taking off a man's leg and doing some injury to the vessel, which was lying to the ebb tide, and could not return the fire until she had moved up and turned, several shots striking in close proximity while this was being done. When in position, a number of shots were fired by the Pequot without reply, when she returned to her anchorage.

Acting Master Lee reports that a battery of 20-pounder rifles opened on the Commodore Morris from the direction of Malvern Hill on the 14th. He steamed up to within one thousand yards of the enemy, and returned the fire with his 100-pounder Parrott. The shell from that failing to explode, he turned the vessel round, and used his 9-inch

guns. The enemy retreated to Malvern Hill, and again opened fire, when the Morris moved further up the river and returned it.

The enemy ceased firing at 5 P. M. No damage was sustained by the Commodore Morris. Captain Smith also states that deserters from Howlett's report that a battery of eight guns is being mounted in the clearing to the left. Acting Volunteer Lieutenant French, commanding the Wilderness, reports (verbally) that the Mendota yesterday engaged a battery near Deep Bottom, which ranged upon the pontoon bridge, and lost two men killed and six wounded.

The Commodore Morris was also engaged at the same time with a battery near Malvern Hill, and received a shell in her magazine, which passed through three barrels of powder, lodging in the shot-locker without exploding. The Wilderness was obliged to pass down in the night, the batteries being still in position. She brought two of the wounded to the Norfolk hospital.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, yours,

S. P. LEE, *Acting Rear-Admiral, comm'ing N. A. B. Squadron.*  
Hon. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.*

The fleet of little steamers reached the Nansemond, and were almost immediately engaged with the rebel force. The intention of the rebel leaders, as our officers supposed, was to surround General Peck. The object of the commanders of our small steamers was to prevent the enemy from crossing the Nansemond, and thus protect the position of General Peck at Suffolk. The Nansemond, like all the small Southern rivers, is a very difficult one in which to manœuvre a war-vessel, though a small one; and it is barely possible to keep a steamer clear of the shores and the bars, even when no enemy is near. But these vessels had to pass along banks where bushes and tufts of grass, and even tree-tops, concealed the rebel sharpshooters, and where batteries open or masked were planted at every available point. No service, whether on land or water, could be more perilous, or more trying to patience or courage, than this. The safety of the army at Suffolk depended very much upon the energy and courage of the officers and crews of this small squadron of little steamers; and at this time the army officers were very urgent in their calls for gunboats to enable them to hold their positions, not only on the Nansemond, but in all that portion of Virginia. Yorktown, Norfolk, and Williamsburg were all threatened.

For the purpose of showing what work the Navy was performing, while the mind of the people was very naturally entirely occupied with the better known movements of the Army, the attention of the reader is asked for some details of these operations on the Nansemond, because they show the heroic character both of the officers and men of the American Navy; and that our sailors, equally with our soldiers, deserve honor and gratitude at the hands of their countrymen.

To describe the daily operations of the Navy in the waters of Virginia would require a separate volume. History, at the best, can only seize upon prominent events; and in such a war as ours, in which every day was one of labor and adventure, if not of peril and battle, a selection must be made, even among important things, or a work would be swelled beyond all reasonable size. Hence very much must be passed over which was productive of really important results, while the details would scarcely interest the general reader.

In the early part of 1864 the work of our vessels upon James River became a little more prominent. The new movement against Richmond under General Grant had brought his victorious army near to Richmond, while General Butler was also at Bermuda Hundred; and both armies were to receive their supplies by the river. The importance of the Navy in this work will appear from the following account of the movement of General Butler's troops from Newport News to City Point and Bermuda Hundred.

Four Monitors, the *Tecumseh*, *Canonicus*, *Saugus*, *Onondaga*, and the captured iron-clad the *Atlanta*, with seven wooden gunboats, the *Osceola*, *Commodore Morris*, *Shokoken*, *Stepping Stones*, *Delaware*, *General Putnam*, and *Shawsheen*, a fleet of twelve vessels in all, were selected to convoy the army transports. These vessels were all provided with apparatus for catching torpedoes and for grappling with fire-rafts. Upon arriving at Harrison's Bar, the *General Putnam* and *Stepping Stones* were ordered to go ahead, and, keeping one or two hundred yards apart, so as not to explode torpedoes under each other, to drag the bar carefully over. When this was done, four of the wooden boats were sent still forward to search the river for one mile above the proposed landing-place at Bermuda

Hundred. The iron-clads were not allowed to go forward until this had been done.

In spite of all these minute precautions, the United States steamer Commodore Jones was blown up by a torpedo, which the dragging failed to discover. The vessel was entirely destroyed, and one-half of her crew were killed and wounded. From some men who were captured on shore, and who were engaged in exploding torpedoes, it was ascertained that the one which destroyed the Jones contained two thousand pounds of powder, and that many of these dangerous machines had been placed in the river.

At this time the rebels had constructed a somewhat formidable fleet—several of which were iron-clads—at Richmond, which Admiral Lee was anxious to engage; and he doubtless would have destroyed it had he been permitted to do so. The rebels erected, among others, a powerful battery at Howlett's Heights to prevent our vessels from ascending; and the army officers, equally solicitous lest the rebel vessels should come down, proposed to prevent them, by sinking obstructions on a bar. The officers of the Navy objected to this, for it would prevent precisely what they desired—a meeting with the rebel ships. But the army officers, fearing that their stores and transports might be endangered, and unwilling to risk any thing where every thing for the time depended on the safety of the Army, carried out their design, and almost literally fenced the two squadrons apart, and virtually "bound them over" to keep the peace. Our ships convoyed transports, and dragged for torpedoes, and guarded the stores, and fired at the distant batteries, and scouted with boats the creeks, and rendered it possible for the Army to win renown; and thus the months wore wearily away.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### CAPTURE OF THE FORTS AT MOBILE BAY, OF THE REBEL GUN-BOATS, AND THE FORMIDABLE IRON-CLAD TENNESSEE.

ON the 20th of January, 1864, Admiral Farragut made a reconnoissance of the defences of Mobile Bay. The Government, in addition to the work which was being done in Tennessee and Northern Georgia, and by Grant at Richmond, desired to make an impression west of the Mississippi, through Banks and Porter, to check the preparations of the rebels for regaining the North Carolina sounds, and, if possible, to capture Mobile. The task of forcing a passage through these formidable defences was wisely intrusted to him who had so triumphantly done what, in the judgment of military men, was an impossible thing, at the forts of the Mississippi. Farragut was at New Orleans, to prepare for this conflict, and not wishing to depend entirely upon the judgment of others, he went himself to Mobile Bay, and made a critical examination from a point so near that he could count the guns on the forts and even the men who stood by them, as well as the piles that had been driven across from Fort Gaines to the channel near Fort Morgan, so as to force vessels close under the guns of the latter work. He thought if he had then one Monitor he could destroy the whole of the naval force of the rebels, and then, coöperating with a land force, could reduce the forts at his leisure. It was known that the rebels had one very formidable iron-clad, the Tennessee, and some other iron-plated gunboats; and Farragut informed the Department, that without iron-clads he could not attack Mobile with any hope of success, and he urged, as early as January, that iron-clads should be sent to him at the first

possible moment. The Monitors on the Atlantic coast could not then be spared, and those which were being built in the West were not ready as soon as was expected, and Farragut was compelled unwillingly to wait.

In the mean time, Banks met with disaster on Red River, which was of course greatly magnified by the rebel reports; the Albemarle had been successful at Plymouth and on the sound, and a panic spread through the Southwest, and in the places which were already in our possession. The rebels in the Southwest were exultant and confident, and a strong pressure was brought to bear upon Admiral Buchanan, as early as May, to go out with the Tennessee and his other iron-clads and destroy or disperse the fleet of Farragut. It was thought that public opinion would compel him to do this. Knowing this, Farragut, though having as much confidence in wooden ships as any man, and with reason, did not feel quite at ease. In the latter part of February Farragut spent several days in shelling Fort Powell, a work on Shell Island, on Grant's Pass, Mississippi Sound, but made, he states, little impression upon it, as he could not get his vessels nearer than about two and a half miles. At that distance the rebels struck his mortar-boats several times with their 100-pounder rifles. On the 17th of March the Tennessee appeared for the first time in the bay, having come out of Dog River. She was floated over the bar by *camels*, and came out into the Bay much sooner than was expected. The admiral wrote to the Secretary on that day: "Unless she fails in some particular, I fear that, with the present force they have inside, it will be much more difficult for us to take Mobile with our wooden vessels than it would have been a week ago." The admiral's view of the case is stated in the following extract from a letter dated in May:

The Tennessee is plated with 6-inch iron, and armed with six Brooks rifles of six and 7-inch calibre.

The Tuscaloosa and Huntsville are plated with 4-inch iron.

The other boats have all one or two Brooks rifles of from one hundred pounds to one hundred and fifty pounds, and the rest of their battery 9-inch guns.

The Morgan, Gaines, and Selma are much the same as our gunboats, perhaps better, armed for long fighting; but if they come outside that

will not serve them. Thus you perceive that I am in hourly expectation of being attacked by an almost equal number of vessels, iron-clad against wooden vessels, and a most unequal contest it will be, as the Tennessee is represented as impervious to all their experiments at Mobile, so that our only hope is to run her down, which we shall certainly do all in our power to accomplish; but should we be unsuccessful, the panic in this part of the country will be beyond all control. They will imagine that New Orleans and Pensacola must fall.

New Orleans is well defended; the forts have each two 15-inch guns, and at range that, I think, would destroy any vessel; but *this place has not a gun* that would hurt a 4-inch plated vessel at the distance the forts will be compelled to fire at them—10-inch shell guns are the heaviest they have, and only four of them, all on different bastions. One iron-clad in Pensacola would be worth all the forts under the present circumstances. Their iron-clads would be afraid to come out to threaten New Orleans or Pensacola. If New Orleans, one iron-clad would be on his trail up the river; if Pensacola, she would probably have an overmatch in the iron-clad's 15-inch guns, and which, if placed between the forts, would lessen the distance to be fired at one-half.

I fully understand and appreciate my situation. The experience I had of the fight between the Arkansas and Admiral Davis's vessels, on the Mississippi, showed plainly how unequal the contest is between iron-clads and wooden vessels in loss of life, unless you succeed in destroying the iron-clad. I therefore deeply regret that the Department has not been able to give us *one* of the many iron-clads that are off Charleston and on the Mississippi. I have always looked for the latter, but it appears that it takes us twice as long to build an iron-clad as any one else. It looks as if the contractors and the fates were against us. While the rebels are bending their whole energies to the war, our people are expecting the war to close by default; and if they do not awake to a sense of their danger soon, it will be so.

But be assured, sir, that the Navy will do its duty, let the issue come when it may, or I am greatly deceived.

I think you have many ready and willing to make any sacrifice their country can require of them.

All I ask of them is *to do their whole duty*; the result belongs to God.

It is good to hear from so brave a man this truly Christian sentiment. On the 25th of May he writes: "I ran in-shore yesterday and took a good look at the iron-clad Tennessee. She



flies the blue flag of Admiral Buchanan. She has four ports on a side, out of which she fights, I understand from the refugees, four 7-inch Brooks rifles, and two 10-inch columbiads. She has a torpedo fixture on the bow. Their four iron-clads and three wooden gunboats make quite a formidable appearance."

It was not until near the middle of July that Admiral Faragut was prepared to issue the following general order to take the preliminary steps for the coming battle. He had been waiting for some Monitors, without which he did not feel justified in making the attack. The Department had done what it could, but the contractors were unable to deliver their vessels according to agreement, and the Secretary felt very sorely the want of suitable Government yards for the construction of iron-clads. By the middle of July the needed iron-clads were so nearly ready that the admiral began his preparations with the following order :

[General Order No. 10.]

U. S. FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, OFF MOBILE BAY, *July 12, 1864.*

Strip your vessels and prepare for the conflict. Send down all your superfluous spars and rigging. Trice up or remove the whiskers. Put up the splinter-nets on the starboard side, and barricade the wheel and steersmen with sails and hammocks. Lay chains or sand-bags on the deck over the machinery, to resist a plunging fire. Hang the sheet-chains over the side, or make any other arrangement for security that your ingenuity may suggest. Land your starboard boats, or lower and tow them on the port side, and lower the port boats down to the water's edge. Place a leadsman and the pilot in the port-quarter boat, or the one most convenient to the commander.

The vessels will run past the forts in couples, lashed side by side, as hereinafter designated. The flag-ship will lead, and steer from Sand Island N. by E. by compass, until abreast of Fort Morgan; then N. W., half N., until past the Middle Ground; then N. by W.; and the others, as designated in the drawing, will follow in due order, until ordered to anchor; but the bow and quarter line must be preserved, to give the chase-guns a fair range; and each vessel must be kept astern of the broadside of the next ahead. Each vessel will keep a very little on the starboard quarter of his next ahead, and, when abreast of the fort, will keep directly astern, and as we pass the fort will take the same distance on the port-quarter of the next ahead, to enable the stern-guns to fire clear of the next vessel astern.

It will be the object of the admiral to get as close to the fort as possible before opening fire; the ships, however, will open fire the moment the enemy opens upon us, with their chase and other guns, as fast as they can be brought to bear. Use short fuses for the shell and shrapnel, and as soon as within three or four hundred yards give the grape. It is understood that heretofore we have fired too high; but, with grape-shot, it is necessary to elevate a little above the object, as grape will dribble from the muzzle of the gun. If one or more of the vessels be disabled, their partners must carry them through, if possible; but if they cannot, then the next astern must render the required assistance; but, as the admiral contemplates moving with the flood-tide, it will only require sufficient power to keep the crippled vessels in the channel.

Vessels that can, must place guns upon [the poop and topgallant forecastle, and in the tops on the starboard side. Should the enemy fire grape, they will remove the men from the topgallant forecastle and poop to the guns below, until out of grape range.

The howitzers must keep up a constant fire from the time they can reach with shrapnel until out of its range.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral, commanding W. G. B. Squadron.*

On the 29th of July he was nearly ready, and issued the following order:

[General Order No. 11.]

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, MOBILE BAY, July 29, 1864.

Should any vessel be disabled to such a degree that her consort is unable to keep her in her station, she will drop out of line to the westward, and not embarrass the vessels next astern by attempting to regain her station. Should she repair damages so as to be able to reënter the line of battle, she will take her station in the rear as close to the last vessel as possible.

So soon as the vessels have passed the fort and kept away northwest, they can cast off the gunboats at the discretion of the senior officer of the two vessels, and allow them to proceed up the bay to cut off the enemy's gunboats that may be attempting to escape up to Mobile. There are certain black buoys placed by the enemy from the piles on the west side of the channel across it toward Fort Morgan. It being understood that there are torpedoes and other obstructions between the buoys, the vessels will take care to pass eastward of the easternmost buoy, which is clear of all obstructions.

So soon as the vessels arrive opposite the end of the piles, it will be best to stop the propeller of the ship, and let her drift the distance past

by her headway and the tide; and those having sidewheel gunboats will continue on by the aid of their paddle-wheels, which are not likely to foul with the enemy's drag-ropes.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral*.

The 5th day of August, 1864, was fixed upon for Farragut's second great battle with forts, iron-clads, and gunboats. The fleet consisted of the following vessels, which, with the exception of the Monitors, were lashed together in pairs, so that if one should be disabled the other could give her assistance:

Brooklyn, Captain James Alden, with the Octarora, Lieutenant C. H. Green, on the port side; Hartford, Captain Percival Drayton, with the Metacomet, Lieutenant J. E. Jowett; Richmond, Captain T. A. Jenkins, with the Port Royal, Lieutenant B. Gherardi; Lackawanna, Captain J. B. Marchand, with the Seminole, Commander E. Donaldson; Monongahela, Commander J. H. Strong, with the Kennebec, Lieutenant W. P. McCann; Ossipee, Commander W. E. Leroy, with the Itasca, Lieutenant George Brown; Oneida, Commander J. R. M. Muloney, with the Galena, Lieutenant C. H. Wells. In addition to these there were four Monitors—the Tecumseh, Commander T. A. M. Craven; the Manhattan, Commander J. W. A. Nicholson; the Winnebago, Commander T. H. Stevens; and the Chickasaw, Lieutenant G. H. Perkins. These Monitors were already inside the bar, and their stations were assigned between the wooden ships and the forts.

At forty-five minutes past five in the morning of the 5th of August the fleet was all under way, steaming steadily up the main ship-channel, the Brooklyn leading the wooden ships, and the Tecumseh at the head of the line of Monitors. At forty-seven minutes past six the battle began by a shot fired from the Tecumseh, which was then nearest the fort. At six minutes past seven the fort opened its fire, to which the Brooklyn replied, and soon after the action became general. At this moment the whole line was thrown into momentary confusion by a terrible casualty. The Monitor Tecumseh, about three hundred yards ahead, and on the starboard bow of the Brooklyn, was struck by a torpedo, and almost instantly went down, carrying with her her commander, the gallant Craven, and a

large number of the crew. Up to this time, the Brooklyn had been exposed to a terrible fire from the fort, which of course she was unable to return with her broadside guns until nearly abreast the fort, and two-thirds of her whole large number of killed and wounded had fallen already, showing the severity of the fight, while she kept on her direct course. She was nearly abreast of the fort, and with her heavy broadside had greatly diminished its fire, when she paused and backed, in order to go around what evidently was a nest of torpedoes. No blame can properly be attached to Captain Alden for this manoeuvre. It was doubtless what he ought to have done under the circumstances, and yet it brought a peril to the fleet which Farragut instantly saw, and as quickly avoided. Had the flag-ship also halted, in a few moments the fleet would have been huddled helplessly together right under the guns of the fort, as the Monitors were at Charleston at the time of Du Pont's attack, and almost certain destruction would have been the result.

But the decision and dash of the admiral saved them from disaster. He steamed ahead in the Hartford, and led on the line in its order. The Brooklyn was quickly under headway again, and followed the Hartford in a position that covered the flag-ship very much from the fire of the fort, and her principal loss was suffered afterward in her encounter with the ram. Had this fleet halted at the obstructions, as the Monitors did at Charleston, all would have been thrown into confusion.

The position of the vessels was such that Admiral Farragut saw he must take the risk of the torpedoes; and knowing that most of them had been some time in the water, he hoped that they would not explode; and so, under a full head of steam, the Hartford rushed between the buoys unharmed. That the number of these terrible machines planted in their track was large, and that the hazard was great, appears from a single interesting fact. As the foremost vessel passed the line of buoys connected with the torpedoes, the men below supposed they heard the firing of musketry. No muskets at that time were fired; and what they heard was, the blows of the torpedo-hammers striking upon caps which did not explode. Each vessel, as it came in range, opened with shells from the bow-guns, and so soon as the broadside would bear, a deadly storm

of shells and shrapnel was poured in from their heavy guns, as rapidly as they could be fired ; and thus the rebel gunners were either killed in their places or driven from their guns, or, where some remained at their stations, they could not fire with accuracy ; and on this account the fleet suffered less in passing Fort Morgan than was expected. Of this part of the action on board the Hartford Captain Drayton wrote: "The rapidity of our fire, together with the smoke, so completely disordered the enemy's aim, that we passed the fort with no great injury or loss of life, a shell which came through the side and exploded a little abaft the mainmast, killing and wounding a large portion of number seven's gun-crew, being the only one that caused much destruction."

About ten minutes before eight o'clock the Hartford had passed the fort, when the ram Tennessee, as had been anticipated, made a dash at the Hartford, coming from behind the fort, where Buchanan, the commander of the rebel fleet, had been watching the approach of our ships, expecting, as they also did at New Orleans, to meet them in a crippled state after passing the fort. The rebel gunboats Morgan, Gaines, and Selma, partially iron-clad, joined in this attack. The Hartford was now placed where she suffered severely. She was under the fire of the Tennessee and the three gunboats at the same time, the gunboats retreating and delivering a raking fire from their stern-guns, which the Hartford could not return. Captain Drayton gives the following account :

As we were getting by the shore-batteries, we came directly under the fire of the gunboats Selma, Morgan, and Gaines, and the ram Tennessee, being only able to direct our fire on one of them at a time ; the shots from the others were delivered with great deliberation, and consequent effect, a single shot having killed ten men and wounded five at number one and her guns. The Tennessee also followed us for some distance, throwing an occasional shot ; but finding that she did not come up, and we being now a mile ahead of the remainder of the fleet, she turned and ran down to them, not wishing, I suppose, to be entirely cut off from Fort Morgan. At this time, by your orders, the Metacomet was cast off, and directed to shove the Selma, which, keeping on our bow, had annoyed us excessively with her three stern-guns, which we could not answer, owing to our rifle gun-carriage having been destroyed by a shell.







Hartford.

Tennessee.

Monitors.

BATTLE OF MOBILE BAY.





After an exciting running fight of an hour, the *Metacomet* captured the *Selma*. The *Gaines* ran on shore, and was burned; and the *Morgan*, having taken shelter under the guns of the fort, escaped in the night up the bay to Mobile, by keeping in the shallow water near the shore, and thus avoiding our vessels. The whole fleet having passed the fort, and the rebel gunboats having been dispersed, the fight appeared to be over, and the ships were ordered to anchor above the fort, and quite beyond the range of its guns.

Fifteen minutes later, the *Tennessee* was seen coming out from under the guns of Fort Morgan, and steering straight for the anchored fleet; and the fight which followed was one of the fiercest on record, and, at the same time, it showed very clearly the comparative value of our different weapons of war. Admiral Buchanan's attack with his single vessel upon Farragut's squadron will be regarded as showing courage and daring of the highest order, or a recklessness bordering on insanity, according to the stand-point from which it is viewed. The Union fleet consisted of seventeen vessels in all, three of them *Monitors*. Three of the wooden ships were our largest sloops, of some two thousand tons burden, and carrying very heavy armaments of 9-inch Dahlgrens and 100-pounder rifles. The smaller vessels were also armed in part with 9-inch guns and heavy rifles. Two of the *Monitors* carried 11-inch guns, and one, the *Manhattan*, had 15-inch Rodmans. To risk an encounter with such a squadron in his one steamer, does certainly seem at first glance to show that Buchanan was utterly mad; but before he is thus judged, one must place himself, as far as possible, in his position, and consider the grounds upon which he would form an opinion, and the motives by which he would be influenced. Although the *Merrimack* had been defeated by the *Monitor*, yet it was well known that she was not seriously injured by the 11-inch shot, and her armor was only equal to four inches in thickness. The *Monitors* had failed in their attack on Charleston, and the *Albemarle* had beaten off a whole fleet, or, to say the least, had successfully resisted them, in the sound; and although the *Atlanta* had been captured, her armor was only four inches thick. The casemates of the *Tennessee* were covered with six inches of iron, an ar-

mor which had never then been penetrated in battle. He knew that his ship was invulnerable, not only to the 9-inch guns and rifles of the wooden ships, but to the 11-inch Dahlgrens of the Monitors. The experience which our wooden ships had thus far had in ramming iron-clads was not calculated to alarm him; while the destruction wrought on wooden vessels by armored ships assured him that he would be likely to destroy any one that he could fairly strike. There was but one vessel in the fleet whose guns he had reason to fear, the Monitor *Manhattan*; and there were not then many naval officers, here or in Europe, who believed that the 15-inch gun could penetrate armor six inches thick. Judging from all the facts in his possession, had not then Admiral Buchanan good reasons for believing that he might destroy a large portion of Farragut's fleet, even if he should finally be captured?

It is thought that a calm review of the results of the action will lead all candid men to this conclusion. Such an examination will be presented after the narration of the fight. So soon as the *Tennessee* was seen approaching, the anchors were quickly hove up, the crews went again to quarters, and every thing was made ready for action. The plan of the admiral for this fight was to run the ram down, in addition to attacking him with the guns. For this purpose the proper orders were given, and the ships started at full speed for their perilous work. The *Monongahela*, a sloop of some fourteen hundred tons burden, carrying some 11-inch and some 9-inch guns, with thirty pounds of steam, and her screw working sixty revolutions, was the first to reach the *Tennessee*. She struck her fair, and in so doing carried away her own iron prow, and her cut-water; and then swinging round, fired into the iron-clad her 11-inch guns, at the distance of a few feet. The *Tennessee* apparently received no injury. Almost immediately after, the *Lackawanna* came on at full speed. She was a screw sloop, similar to the *Monongahela*. She also struck the rebel ram fairly. The result is best given in Captain Marchand's own words:

I started under the heaviest headway to run her down, and succeeded in striking her at right angles, at the after-end of the casemate. The concussion was great, but the effect on her was only a heavy list,

whilst our stern was cut and crushed to the plank ends, for a distance of three feet above the water's edge to five feet below, and causing a considerable leak in the forward store-room and peak. Fortunately our yards and topmasts were down; otherwise they, in all probability, would have been carried away by the concussion, which caused the ship to rebound, and the stem of the Tennessee to recede.

The Tennessee was uninjured by these blows, and was dealing destruction round her with her guns, though she had no opportunity of striking any of our ships with her prow. The Hartford was the third vessel which attempted to run down the ram. The Tennessee sheered, and the blow was a glancing one, and as they rasped along each other's sides, the Hartford poured in her whole port broadside, within ten feet of her casemate. The shot produced no perceptible effect. The Tennessee had, at the moment, only two guns on that broadside. One missed fire several times; but a shell from the other came through the Hartford's side, and exploded on her berth-deck, killing and wounding several men, and the pieces broke through the spar and berth decks, even going through the launch and into the hold, where the wounded were. Soon after parting with the ram, and while making a circuit with the intention of striking her again, she received herself a blow from the Lackawanna, which knocked two of her ports into one, and cut her down within two feet of the water's edge. The Brooklyn used her 9-inch guns upon the ram without effect; but received some destructive shots in return. Other wooden vessels also received from the Tennessee's guns material injury, inflicting none upon her in return which impaired her fighting powers. In the mean time, the Monitors had gathered round her, and the Chickasaw and Winnebago were firing 11-inch shot, and the Manhattan was using her 15-inch guns. A 15-inch shot struck the ram fairly on the casemate, broke entirely through the six inch plating, and through the wooden backing, although it did not enter the ship. Commander Nicholson claims that four of the 15-inch shots which he fired struck the Tennessee, and that, in addition to the shot just mentioned, one carried away her steering-gear, and another disabled a port-shutter, so that the gun could not be used. In addition to this, the Monitor Chickasaw

shot away the smoke-stack of the *Tennessee*; and soon the ram, which had made a most gallant and destructive fight, ran up the white flag and surrendered; and thus ended the most remarkable, the bloodiest, and the most instructive naval combat of the war. Many of the papers hastened to announce it as a victory of wooden ships over iron-clads, and as demonstrating the worthlessness of the *Monitors* and of the new heavy guns. Such statements served only to mislead; they were not warranted by a single fact in the case. Some appeared to feel that it would detract something from the fame of Admiral Farragut if it should be proved that wooden ships did not capture the *Tennessee*. Fortunately for the admiral, it was not necessary to his reputation to prove that a wooden ship and nine guns could destroy one plated with six-inch iron. He fought the action bravely, nobly, victoriously. He used all the means in his power. And is it any reproach to him to show that his iron-clads were needed to conquer the iron-clad of his enemy?

Admiral Farragut, in his report of this action, bears this testimony to the admirable character of Captain Percival Drayton, whose untimely death, not long after, was so generally lamented:

The *Hartford*, my flag-ship, was commanded by Captain Percival Drayton, who exhibited throughout that coolness and ability for which he has long been known to his brother officers. But I must speak of that officer in a double capacity. He is the fleet-captain of my squadron; and one of more determined energy, untiring devotion to duty, and zeal for the service, tempered by great calmness, I do not think adorns any navy. I desire to call your attention to this officer, though well aware that, in thus speaking, I am only communicating officially to the Department that which it knew full well before.

In the same report he thus mentions Captain (afterward Commodore) Thornton A. Jenkins:

Before closing this report, there is one other officer of my squadron of whom I feel bound to speak: Captain T. A. Jenkins, of the *Richmond*, who was formerly my chief of staff. Not because of his having held that position, but because he never forgets to do his duty to the Government, and takes now the same interest in the fleet as when he stood in that relation to me. He is also the commanding officer of the

second division of my squadron; and as such has shown ability and the most untiring zeal. He carries out the spirit of one of Lord Collingwood's best sayings, "Not to be afraid of doing too much. Those who are, seldom do as much as they ought." I feel I should not be doing my duty did I not call the attention of the Department to an officer who has performed all his various duties with so much zeal and fidelity.

The following general order was issued after the fight:

FLAG-SHIP HARTFORD, MOBILE BAY, August 7, 1864.

The admiral desires the fleet to return thanks to Almighty God for the signal victory over the enemy on the morning of the 5th instant.

D. G. FARRAGUT, *Rear-Admiral, commanding W. G. B. Squadron.*

If, now, the reader will carefully examine the following report of the officers who were appointed to make a careful and critical survey of the Tennessee after the action, he will be prepared for some remarks upon the results of this extraordinary battle:

U. S. STEAM-SLOOP RICHMOND, INSIDE OF MOBILE BAY, August 13, 1864.

SIR: In obedience to your order of the 6th instant, herewith appended, we have the honor respectfully to report, that we have made a strict and careful survey of the iron-clad casemated steamer Tennessee, captured from the rebels in the engagement in this bay, on the morning of the 5th instant, by the fleet under your command, and submit as follows, namely:

#### DESCRIPTION OF TENNESSEE'S HULL.

The hull of the vessel appears to be exceedingly strongly built in every part, the materials being oak and yellow pine, with iron fastenings. Length from stem to stern on deck, two hundred and nine feet. Greatest breadth of beam on deck, forty-eight feet. Mean average draught of water, about fourteen feet.

The deck is covered, fore and aft, with wrought-iron plates two inches thick.

The sides of the vessel are protected by an overhang, sponsoned, and covered with two layers of two-inch wrought iron.

This overhang extends about six feet below the water-line.

The sides of the vessel below the deck are believed to be eight feet thick, and the distance from the knuckle, or outside of the overhang on deck, to the base of the casemate on either side, is ten feet.

The vessel is provided with a strong beak or prow, which projects

about two feet under water, formed by the continuation of the sponsoning, and covered with wrought-iron plates.

#### CASEMATE.

The casemate of the vessel is very strongly built. It is seventy-eight feet eight inches long, and twenty-eight feet nine inches wide inside, the sides of the vessel extending ten feet from it on either side at the greatest breadth of beam.

The framing consists of heavy yellow-pine beams, thirteen inches thick, and placed close together vertically. Outside planking of yellow pine, five and a half inches thick, laid on horizontally, and outside of this horizontal planking there is a layer of oak timber four inches thick, bolted on vertically, upon which the iron plating is secured.

The plating or armor of the casemate forward is six inches thick, consisting of three two-inch iron plates, of about six inches wide each, and abaft and on the sides five inches thick, consisting of two two-inch and one one-inch iron plates of the same width.

The yellow-pine framing of the casemate is planked over inside with two-and-a-half inch oak timber laid on diagonally.

The whole of the armor plating is fastened with through-bolts, one and a quarter inch diameter, with washers and nuts inside.

The casemate is covered on top with wrought-iron grating, composed of bars two inches thick and six inches wide, laid flat, and supported on wooden beams twelve inches square, and about five feet distant from each other. Some of these gratings are hinged and fitted to open from the inside. There are ten gun-ports in the casemate—two in the broadside on either side, three forward, and three aft.

The forward and after ports, to port and starboard, are placed so as to enable the forward and after pivot-guns to be used as broadside-guns. The directly forward and after ports are on a line with the keel.

The ports are elongated and made just wide enough for the entrance of the muzzle of the guns in training, and only high enough to allow a moderate elevation and depression of the gun.

The wooden backing is cut away on each side of the ports inside of the casemate, to allow the guns to be trained about one point forward and aft. The gun-ports are covered with wrought-iron sliding plates or shutters, five inches thick; those for the four broadside guns are fitted in slides. The sliding plates or shutters for the pivot-guns are pivoted on the edge, with one bolt that can be knocked out, detaching the shutter, if necessary, and are worked by a combination of racks and pinions.

**ARMAMENT.**

The armament of the *Tennessee* consists of six rifled guns, called by the rebels Brooks's rifles.

The two pivot-guns are 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch bore, and the four broadside-guns are 6-inch bore. These guns are reinforced abaft by two wrought-iron bands, two inches thick respectively. Weight of projectiles, ninety-five pounds and one hundred and ten pounds solid shot.

The pivot-guns are fitted on wooden slides, with a rack let into them. On an arm attached to the carriage there is a pinion for running out the gun, and by raising the arm the rack is thrown out of gear to allow the gun to recoil. The arrangements for working the battery, and the implements and machinery employed, appear to be very good.

**QUARTERS FOR OFFICERS AND CREW.**

The cabin is large and comfortable for an iron-clad vessel.

The wardroom is situated immediately over the engine, and is open to it, and although sufficiently commodious, we are of opinion that it would be impossible for officers or others to preserve their health, or to live there comfortably for any considerable length of time, in the absence of a better and more perfect ventilation than is at present provided.

The quarters of the crew are excellent, and exceedingly comfortable for an iron-clad vessel of her description. These quarters consist of a roomy berth-deck, with rooms fitted up on either side for the junior officers.

The berth-deck communicates with the casemate by means of a large hatch, and is provided with two large ventilators through the deck, outside of the casemate.

When in port, and in moderately smooth sea, it is believed that the berth-deck will be found to be sufficiently well ventilated to insure a reasonable degree of comfort to the crew; but when the ventilators are unshipped, it is believed that the one blower now on board (and which is also used for forcing the fires) is not sufficient to produce a proper circulation of fresh air.

The steering arrangements appear to be very defective, and the accommodations for the pilot and helmsman bad. These defects can, however, be easily remedied, and at a small cost.

**MACHINERY.**

The machinery of the vessel consists of two geared non-condensing engines.

Cylinders twenty-four inches diameter and seven feet stroke, with



poppet-valves arranged as is the usual mode on board of Western river steamers.

These engines were taken out of the river steamer called the Alonzo Child. They are placed fore and aft in the vessel, geared to an idler shaft by spur-gearing with wooden teeth, and from the idler shaft to the propeller shaft by bevel cast-iron gear.

#### BOILERS.

There are four horizontal flue-boilers, twenty-four feet long, placed side by side, with one furnace under the whole of them; the products of combustion returning through the flues are delivered into one smoke-pipe. The engine and fire-rooms are insufferably hot and very badly ventilated.

#### INJURIES RECEIVED IN THE ACTION.

The injuries to the casemate of the Tennessee from shot are very considerable. On its after-side nearly all the plating is started; one bolt driven in; several nuts knocked off inside; gun-carriage of the after pivot-gun damaged, and the steering rod or chain cut near that gun. There are unmistakable marks on the after-part of the casemate of not less than nine 11-inch solid shot having struck within the space of a few square feet in the immediate vicinity of that port. On the port side of the casemate the armor is also badly damaged from shot. On that side, nearly amidships of the casemate, and between the two broadside guns, a 15-inch solid shot knocked a hole through the armor and backing, leaving on the inside an undetached mass of oak and pine splinters, about three by four feet, and projecting inside of the casemate about two feet from the side. This is the only shot that penetrated the wooden backing of the casemate, although there are numerous places on the inside giving evidence of the effect of the shot.

There are visible between forty and fifty indentations and marks of shot on the hull, deck, and casemate, varying from very severe to slight; nine of the deepest indentations on the after-part of the casemate (evidently being 11-inch shot), and the marks of about thirty of other calibres on different parts of the vessel.

There are also a few other marks, being, however, merely scratches or slight indentations of the plating.

The smoke-stack was shot away, although it is not improbable the heavy ramming by the Monongahela, Lackawanna, and Hartford, had previously prepared it for its fall.

Three of the wrought-iron port shutters or slides were so much damaged by shot as to prevent the firing of the guns.

There are no external visible marks or evidences of injury inflicted upon the hull of the Tennessee by the severe ramming by the Monongahela, Lackawanna, and Hartford; but, inasmuch as the decks leak badly, and when there is a moderate sea running in the bay, her reported usual leakage of three inches an hour being now increased to five or six inches an hour, it is fairly to be inferred that the increased leakage is caused by the concussion of the vessels.

The Tennessee is in a state to do good service now.

To restore her to the state of efficiency in which she was when she went into the action with this fleet on the 5th instant, it will be necessary to overhaul much of the iron plating on the port and after-sides of the casemate, and replace some of it.

The iron gun-port slides or shutters, which were damaged, must be either removed or repaired. A new smoke-stack is required, and additional ventilators should be fitted. Blowers are required to produce proper ventilation in the engine-room and on the berth-deck.

When these small repairs and additions shall have been made, the iron-clad Tennessee will be a most formidable vessel for harbor and river service, and for operating generally in smooth water, both offensively and defensively.

The original of this report is accompanied by sectional views of the Tennessee, and a sketch showing the effect of shot on the outside.

We are, very respectfully, your obedient servants,

THORNTON A. JENKINS, *Captain.*

JAMES ALDEN, *Captain.*

WILLIAM E. LEROY, *Commander.*

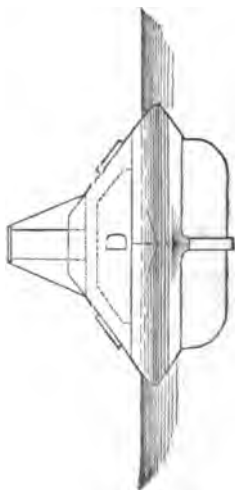
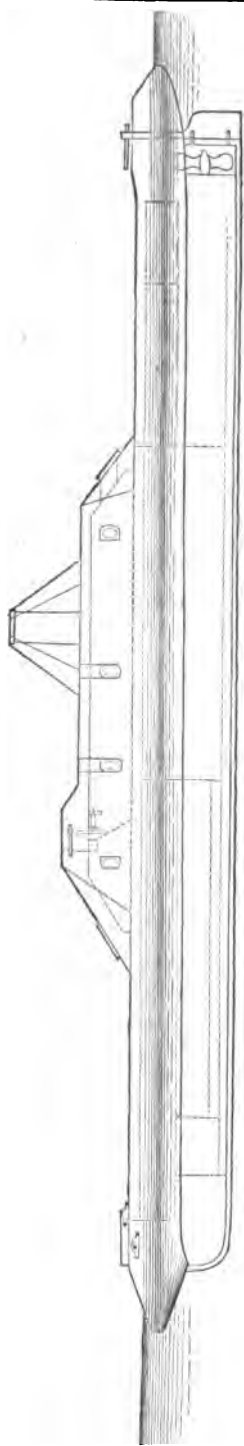
T. WILLIAMSON, *Chief Engineer.*

Rear-Admiral D. G. FARRAGUT,

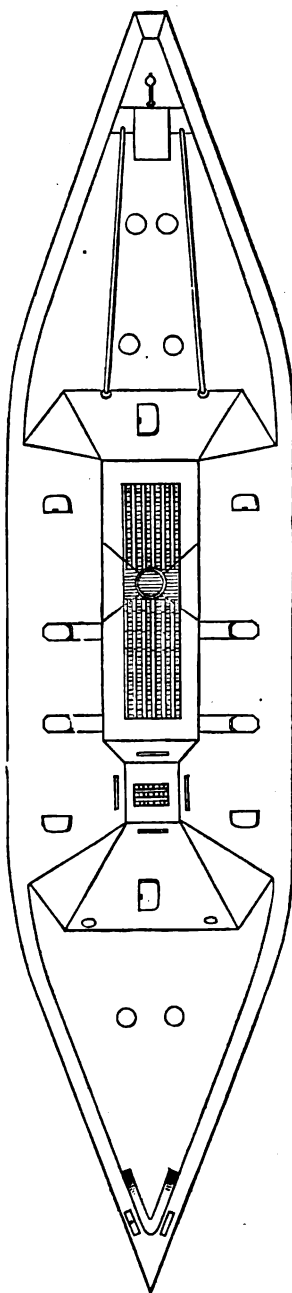
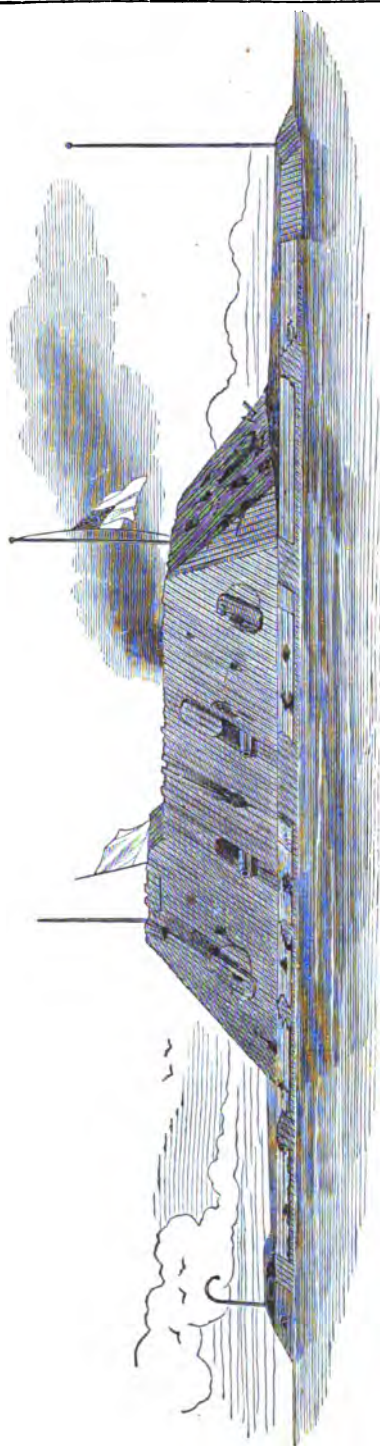
*commanding W. G. B. Squadron, U. S. Flag-Ship Hartford.*

In summing up the results of this battle, the reader's attention is asked, first of all, to the greater protection which an iron-clad affords to the crew in battle. The number of killed and wounded on the wooden vessels was as follows:

	Killed.	Wounded.		Killed.	Wounded.
Hartford .....	25	28	Richmond .....	0	2
Brooklyn .....	11	43	Galena .....	0	1
Lackawanna .....	4	35	Octarora .....	1	10
Oneida .....	8	30	Kennebec .....	1	6
Monongahela .....	0	6	—	—	—
Metacomet .....	1	2	Total .....	52	170
Ossipee .....	1	7	Three Monitors....	0	0



REBEL RAM "TENNESSEE."



0 5 10 20 30 40 50 fms

*Surrendering to the U. S. Squadron, Rear Admiral D. G. Farragut.—Mobile Bay, August 5, 1864.*

The loss at the famous battle of the passage of the New Orleans forts was thirty-seven killed, and one hundred and forty-nine wounded; so that, besides those who went down with the *Tecumseh*, the number of killed and wounded was greater at Mobile, while the loss in the mere passage of the fort was small, except on board the *Brooklyn*. Without being able to make an accurate comparison, it would appear, from an inspection of carpenters' reports, that the vessels were more severely injured at Mobile than at New Orleans, and that, except in the *Brooklyn*, the damage was mainly caused by collisions with the *Tennessee*, or by her shot and shell. Another very important question arises in regard to this fight. What injury did these powerful wooden vessels inflict upon the *Tennessee*?

The answer to this question is exceedingly important in its bearing upon naval war in the future, and it depends entirely upon the testimony of those engaged in the battle, and those who after the action made an official examination of the *Tennessee*. She was struck successively by the *Monongahela*, the *Lackawanna*, the *Hartford*, and the *Ossipee*. The first two received serious injuries, which have already been described. The *Hartford's* blow was a glancing one, and little damage was done; the *Ossipee* lost a part of her forefoot in a collision after the ram hoisted a white flag, and which was not intended. In regard to the *Tennessee*, the surveying-officers reported: "There are no external visible marks or evidences of injury inflicted upon the hull of the *Tennessee* by the severe ramming of the *Monongahela*, *Lackawanna*, and *Hartford*, but they think that, inasmuch as her leakage was increased from three inches an hour to five or six inches an hour, it is fairly to be inferred that the increased leakage was caused by the concussion of the vessels." But when it is considered that she was struck repeatedly by 11-inch, and 9-inch shot, when only a few feet distant, and when her thick casemate was broken through, and her armor-plating was in other places loosened by shot, is not the inference a fair one, that these shot caused the increase in her leakage, instead of the collisions, that left no visible evidence whatever of injury? Most persons will probably reach the conclusion, that the frame of the *Tennessee* was weakened by the concussion of shot, and not by the ramming.

Still another question presents itself. What damage was done to the rebel iron-clad by the fire of the Monitors? The answer is easily given. One 15-inch shot crashed through the casemate; another, as the commander of the *Manhattan* claims, carried away her steering-gear; and another Monitor shot her smoke-stack away, and all the deep indentations in her armor were made, as the examining board reported, by 11-inch shot. Now, the Monitors carried all the 11-inch guns in the fleet, except two, and these were on the *Monongahela*, and her captain reports that they were fired *once* at the *Tennessee*. It would seem, then, an inevitable conclusion, that the *Tennessee* received no important injury of any kind, except that which was caused by the shot of the Monitors. Another point cannot be passed without some consideration, because it will have an influence, perhaps, upon battles yet to be fought. As it appears from the official report that the only serious injury which the *Tennessee* received was from the fire of the Monitors, and this was severe enough to cause her surrender, would not the Monitors have captured her quite as easily had no wooden vessels been present? The fact that no material damage was done to the rebel ship until the Monitors came up, is at least a very significant fact to be weighed in determining this question.

The trial made in this battle of wooden ships against an iron-clad, and the similar experiment with the *Albemarle* on the sound, have probably ended this mode of warfare. Ships and men will not hereafter be thus exposed, with scarcely a possibility of success, and with a certainty of serious damage to the wooden vessel and a fearful loss of life. In future naval war, wood, even with "hearts of oak" behind it, will not be matched against iron casemates, protecting heavy shell-guns. A Monitor captured the *Atlanta* without the loss of a man. At Mobile the *Tecumseh* was blown up, as any other ship would have been by the same torpedo, but the three remaining iron-clads disabled the most formidable vessel that the rebels ever brought into action, and they did it without the loss of a man. Such facts require no comment. Again, this fight proved anew, what had been shown before, that both 9-inch and 11-inch guns are nearly useless against heavy iron-plating, even when fired at

the distance of only a few feet, while the 15-inch shot was driven through the six inches of iron and the thick wooden backing, though it did not enter the ship. Commander Nicholson, in his report, reveals the reason why the 15-inch gun exhibited greater power at this time than when used against the *Atlanta*. He fired charges of sixty pounds of powder, while the charges used at Charleston were only thirty-five pounds. Afterward, at Shoeburyness, with a charge of one hundred pounds of *mammoth* powder, equal to perhaps seventy pounds of cannon-powder, the gun sent its shot through the 8-inch plate of the Hercules target. The event has proved that Commander Nicholson ran no risk; and perhaps without these charges the Tennessee would not have been captured.

By this famous battle Admiral Farragut added to his already great renown, and from that period his reputation as a great naval commander was settled on an enduring basis. On no other occasion did his daring and decision manifest themselves more gloriously than there. The manner in which he decided on the instant to dash ahead, when the Brooklyn was momentarily stopped to avoid the torpedo-buoys, shows that he has the qualities of the great naval officer, fitted for the highest position and the most important trusts, and the country made no mistake in the honors which it conferred.

Another quality of a great leader has been shown by Farragut. He infused into his officers and men his own enthusiasm and energy. Officers and men alike bore themselves as heroes—the wounded and dying even cheering at the notes of victory.

Forts Gaines and Powell were almost immediately surrendered, but Fort Morgan was not captured until the 23d of August, when a joint attack was made by the army and navy, which, after a bombardment of twenty-four hours, resulted in the surrender of the fort.

Mobile was thus closed effectually to any approach from the ocean, and the city, for all military purposes, was in the possession of the Union. The town was not taken possession of until the following April, but for all practical purposes it was captured when its forts were captured and its navy was destroyed. The operations of the Navy in 1864, subsequent to

this date, were not distinguished by any very brilliant actions, but at all points the same unwearied activity prevailed—everywhere officers and men were working bravely on toward the common end, and every day, at every station, deeds were done worthy of record, if only the historian could command the necessary space.



## CHAPTER XL

### THE SINKING OF THE ALABAMA.

No event of the war excited such deep indignation, such bitter resentment, as the piratical career of the famous Alabama. It was not alone because she committed such havoc with our commerce, lighting the seas as she did with the flames of our merchantmen, nor was it that she had sunk with ease one of our merchant steam-gunboats, but our people were greatly exasperated because England sent forth exultingly a British ship, with British guns and seamen trained in her own government practice-ship, a vessel English in every essential but her flag, to lay waste the commerce of a country with which she professed to be at peace. Insultingly this vessel was named "290," to show, by the large number that had contributed to fit her out, how widespread was English sympathy for the rebel cause. The Alabama was not regarded as a rebel vessel-of-war, but as a British pirate, or rather perhaps as an English man-of-war sent forth under the thin veil of the rebel flag to sink and destroy our merchantmen. The short-lived triumph thus obtained by England was probably one of the most costly gratifications in which she has ever indulged; and deeply mortified as we were that the successful rover should escape our watchful cruisers, and pursue unmolested so long her work of destruction, in the end, the pride of England was more deeply and bitterly wounded than our own, while at the same time she was held responsible for the destruction of our property. England will probably have reason to remember the Alabama quite as long as the Americans.

The successful movements of this Anglo-rebel cruiser were such as to attract the attention of Europe as well as of America.

England seemed to have adopted Semmes as her champion, and, judging from the expressions of English papers, and what Americans believed to be the effective though quiet support of the government, the governing class at least in Great Britain were as much pleased with the success of the Alabama as were the people of the South. There was enough of mystery connected with her operations to excite the imagination, and scarcely was any phantom-ship ever invested with a more unreal character than was this modern highwayman of the sea. The size, the speed, the armament of the ship, were all exaggerated in the minds of the people, till many feared to have one of our war-ships encounter her, lest she should be captured or sunk as the Hatteras was.

She seemed to be everywhere, and yet was nowhere to be found when sought by our ships; and some were inclined to think that our naval officers were not very anxious to test her power. The result showed how little reason there was for such injurious suspicions. Neither skill nor swiftness in pursuit could make it an easy task to overtake a single rapid steamer to which all seas were open, and commanded by one who knew well the probable course that his pursuers would take, while his movements could not be anticipated by them. Besides, the Alabama seldom entered a port, and therefore could not be readily traced. She burned or sunk the vessels she captured, and then disappeared. The Navy Department and the chief officers of the Navy did not of course sympathize with those who magnified the power of the rebel rover, because they had accurate knowledge of the size, strength of hull, speed, armament, and crew. They knew, therefore, precisely what class of vessels to send in pursuit of her, and were by no means nervous about results when such ships as the Kearsarge were placed where they might meet this scourge of our commerce.

In the early part of 1862, Captain (now Commodore) John A. Winslow was placed in command of the gunboat Kearsarge, and was ordered to cruise on the coast of Europe in search of rebel steamers. Captain Winslow had done good service not only before the breaking out of the rebellion, but also on the Mississippi, under Admiral Foote, and the Department was quite willing to trust him and his ship even in a conflict with

the Alabama. In his search for the rebel rover he displayed great boldness and energy. He blockaded the Florida for some time in midwinter, and did not leave her station until short of coal and provisions. While absent to obtain these, the Florida went to sea. He found the Rappahannock at Calais, and lay off this port two months, watching, but the rebel kept close in harbor. The result of this was, the dismantling of the blockaded ship. Having thus disposed of one enemy, he soon after learned that the Alabama was at Cherbourg. He immediately set sail for that port and reached it ten days after, and took his position before the harbor.

Semmes, the commander of the Alabama, was now fairly caught. He was placed where he would be compelled to fight the Kearsarge, or acknowledge his inferiority by submitting quietly and timidly, as the world would judge, to the blockade. He could in no way escape from one or the other horn of this dilemma; and he knew that he would be disgraced in the eyes of all Europe, and especially would he be despised in England, if he should refuse the combat. He knew, too, that if he should succeed, it would be a more important victory than any the rebels before gained, and that it would be a blow at the Union cause which would probably secure for the rebel government a recognition from England and France. He put a bold face upon the situation, and sent Winslow a challenge. Semmes had some good reasons for believing that he might be victorious in such a battle. He knew that the Alabama was somewhat larger than the Kearsarge, that she carried one more gun, and that he had a picked crew, trained English gunners, and that his men were flushed and confident through success, and stimulated to enthusiasm by the well-known sympathies of those around them; and that the British portion of the crew, knowing how the Alabama was fitted out, felt that they were to fight more for the honor of England than to maintain the cause of the South. Why should he not hope for success?

Of course, Captain Winslow, who had been earnestly seeking for such an opportunity, did not disdain the fight. He and his crew were fully aware of all the consequences involved in the battle; and sharing in the indignant feelings that pervaded the North, they determined that they would either

conquer the Alabama or go to the bottom themselves. They did not think even of the possibility of being taken into Cherbourg a prize to the Alabama. They chose death rather than the sneer and triumph of the rebels and their European friends.

The news of the approaching combat spread rapidly through Cherbourg, and soon to Paris, where great interest was manifested in the result; and it was said that arrangements were made to telegraph to the French capital the progress and result of the fight.

On Sunday morning, June 19, 1864, the Alabama having made all possible preparations to insure success, steamed out of Cherbourg harbor, accompanied by the French iron-clad frigate Couronne. The morning was a very fine one; the sea was calm, and a light haze spread like a transparent veil over the water, adding beauty to the scene, without obscuring the movements of either ship. The French frigate accompanied the Alabama only so far as to make it certain that she would not be attacked until beyond the line of French jurisdiction. A small steamer bearing the flag of the royal yacht squadron of England also came out of Cherbourg; but this attracted no attention at the time. The Alabama was first seen at twenty minutes past 10 o'clock, when the Kearsarge was immediately headed seaward, with the double intention of avoiding all question about jurisdiction, and of drawing the rebel ship so far from shore that, in case of her being partially disabled, she could not escape by running into French waters. The Kearsarge was cleared for action, with the battery pivoted to starboard. Having reached a point about seven miles from shore, Captain Winslow turned his ship short round and steered directly for the Alabama.

The moment the Kearsarge came round, the Alabama sheered, presented her starboard battery, and slowed her engines. The intention of Captain Winslow was to run down his adversary if circumstances should permit, and he therefore kept on his course. When at the distance of a mile the Alabama fired a full broadside, with the hope of crippling the Kearsarge; but, except cutting some of her rigging, no damage was done. Captain Winslow now gave his vessel more speed, intending to close with and strike his enemy, but within ten minutes the

Alabama had loaded and fired another broadside, and followed that almost immediately with a third. No shot from these three broadsides struck the hull or spars of the Kearsarge, and no gun had been fired in return ; but as the vessels were now only about seven hundred yards apart, and Captain Winslow did not deem it prudent to expose his ship to another raking fire, accordingly the Kearsarge was sheered, and she opened her fire. The ships were thus brought broadside to broadside ; but Semmes soon made it apparent that he would not willingly risk a close action, and the fear of Winslow was that he would again make for shore and thus escape. To prevent this, Captain Winslow kept his vessel at full speed, with the design of running under the stern of the Alabama, so as to secure a raking position. To avoid this, the Alabama was sheered so as to keep her broadside to the Kearsarge ; and as she too was under a full head of steam, both vessels were forced into a circular movement, steaming in opposite directions round a common centre, this centre shifting with each revolution, a current setting westward at the rate of three miles per hour. Had the action been fought on parallel lines with the Alabama heading in-shore, she would have reached the line of jurisdiction, and thus escaped. But by being compelled to steam in circles, she was five miles from shore, when, at the close of the action, she attempted to run into Cherbourg.

From the commencement of the action till near its close, the firing of the Alabama was very rapid, and also very wild. For the first eighteen minutes not a man was injured on the Kearsarge. Then a 68-pound Blakely shell passed through the star-board bulwarks below the main rigging, and exploded on the quarter-deck, wounding three men at the after pivot-gun, one of whom, William Gorrin, afterward died. This was the first and only casualty to the crew of the Kearsarge during the fight. The firing of the Kearsarge was deliberate, and especial pains were taken in the aiming of the 11-inch pivots. They were pointed rather below than above the water-line, and at the distance of half a mile or less they were fired with great precision and terrible effect. One shell killed and wounded eighteen men, and disabled a gun ; another exploded in the coal-bunkers and completely blocked the engine-room, and others

tore great holes in the Alabama's sides ; and it was seen, long before the battle ended, that the pirate's race was run.

Thus for an hour the battle went on, the Kearsarge suffering but little, while nearly every gun from her told upon the doomed Alabama with increasing power. The huge shells crashed through her sides, exploding in her timbers, and tearing her frame in pieces, or on her decks, and sweeping down her crew, many of whom were literally torn in fragments by those fearful missiles. The ship was being rapidly smashed into a ruin, and her decks were strewn with the dead and wounded, and the water was rushing in floods through her sides. Semmes made one desperate effort to escape. He suddenly winded his vessel, set what sail he could, heading for the shore. It was too late. The Alabama was rapidly sinking, and the rising water put out the engine-fires. A few more well-directed shots brought down the rebel flag, but Winslow was uncertain whether it had been struck or shot away ; when just then a white flag was seen, and his fire was withheld. In a moment after the Alabama opened fire again, which of course was returned. The Kearsarge now steamed ahead, and was laid across the Alabama's bow with the intention of sinking her. As the white flag was still seen flying, the fire was reserved. Shortly after it was seen that her boats were being lowered, and then an officer came alongside and informed Captain Winslow that the Alabama had surrendered, and was rapidly sinking. The Kearsarge had only two boats in a condition to be sent to the assistance of the captured rebel ; and before they could reach her—the Alabama having settled by the stern—raised her bows high in air, as if in the death-agony, shook her mizzenmast overboard, and plunged beneath the waves. In an instant the crew were all struggling in the water, the boats of the Kearsarge picking up those they could, while the small English steamer that had come out of Cherbourg in the morning, being now at hand, was hailed and requested to aid in saving the prisoners. Both parties dragged out of the water such as they could reach, and when Winslow had finished his work of humanity he found that the English royal yacht was edging away instead of delivering on board the prisoners that she had picked up. He did not believe that any one could be

so lost to all sense of honor as to steal away with the men who had surrendered themselves as prisoners, and therefore he neither fired into nor pursued her. When the shameful truth was known, it was too late to rectify the mistake of confiding in the Englishman's honor. He had picked up among the rest the captain of the corsair, concealed him in the bottom of the boat, under a hammock-cloth, then took him on board the yacht *Deerhound*, and steamed away for Southampton.

The officer from the *Alabama* who came alongside the *Kearsarge*, and surrendered himself and the ship, asked permission to return with his boat and aid in saving the men, went himself to the *Deerhound*, and so made his escape. It was an appropriate end for the *Alabama* thus to be shattered and sunk by the guns of a Union ship; and it was perfectly in character for those who had proved traitors to their own Government to feel no sense of disgrace at a violation of all the rules of war; and it was certainly in harmony with fitting out the *Alabama* from an English port, with British capital, men, and guns, that an Englishman should steal the prisoners that Captain Winslow had intrusted to his honor, by asking him to aid in saving them. For this treacherous and cowardly transaction Mr. Lancaster was honored next to the traitor whom he had saved; and the saddest sight of all was, that England was not ashamed.

Perhaps no victory of the war gave more intense satisfaction to the friends of the Union than this. It was not merely that the ocean was at length delivered from this seemingly ubiquitous destroyer, though that was much. Viewed only as a triumph over a rebel ship, it excited little feeling; but inasmuch as it was well known that the *Alabama* was essentially a British vessel, the exultation which thrilled the country at our naval victories in 1812-'15 seemed to rouse the people again. They felt that it was England that was beaten when the *Alabama* went down; and England, most unwisely, gave good reason both for the indignation and the joy. The Secretary of the Navy addressed to Captain Winslow the following letter:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *July 6, 1864.*

SIR: Your very brief dispatches of the 19th and 20th ultimo, informing the Department that the piratical craft *Alabama*, or "290," had been

sunk on the 19th of June, near Meridian, by the Kearsarge, under your command, were this day received. I congratulate you on your good fortune in meeting this vessel, which had so long avoided the fastest ships and some of the most vigilant and intelligent officers of the service; and for the ability displayed in this combat you have the thanks of the Department.

You will please express to the officers and crew of the Kearsarge the satisfaction of the Government at the victory over a vessel superior in tonnage, superior in number of guns, and superior in the number of her crew. The battle was so brief, the victory so decisive, and the comparative results so striking, that the country will be reminded of the brilliant actions of our infant Navy, which have been repeated and illustrated in this engagement.

The Alabama represented the best maritime effort of the most skilled English workshops. Her battery was composed of the well-tried 32-pounders of fifty-seven hundred weight, of the famous 68-pounder of the British navy, and of the only successful rifled 100-pounder yet produced in England. The crew were generally recruited in Great Britain, and many of them received superior training on board her majesty's gunnery-ship, the Excellent.

The Kearsarge is one of the first gunboats built at our navy-yards at the commencement of the rebellion, and lacks the improvements of vessels now under construction. The principal guns composing her battery had never been previously tried in an exclusively naval engagement, yet in one hour you succeeded in sinking your antagonist, thus fully ending her predatory career, and killed many of her crew, without injury to the Kearsarge or the loss of a single life on your vessel. Our countrymen have reason to be satisfied that in this, as in every naval action of this unhappy war, neither the ships, the guns, nor the crew have been deteriorated, but that they maintain the abilities, and continue the renown, which ever adorned our naval annals.

The President has signified his intention to recommend that you receive a vote of thanks, in order that you may be advanced to the grade of commodore.

Lieutenant Commander James S. Thornton, the executive officer of the Kearsarge, will be recommended to the Senate for advancement ten numbers in his grade, and you will report to the Department the names of any others of the officers or crew whose good conduct on the occasion entitles them to special mention.

Very respectfully,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Captain JOHN A. WINSLOW, *U. S. N.,*

*commanding U. S. Steamer Kearsarge, Cherbourg, France.*



The Secretary also sent him the following note in regard to the conduct of the commander of the *Deerhound* :

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *July 12, 1864.*

SIR : Your dispatch of the 21st ultimo (No. 21) is received, stating your efforts to save the lives of the survivors of the *Alabama*, after the battle of the 19th of June, and after the formal surrender and destruction of that vessel. Your efforts in the cause of humanity in striving to rescue these men, most of them aliens, who have, under their ignoble leader—himself a deserter from our service and a traitor to our flag—been for nearly two years making piratical war on unarmed merchantmen, are rightly appreciated.

It is to be regretted that the confidence and generous sympathy which you exercised, and which would actuate all honorable minds under similar circumstances, should have been so requited and abused by the persons on board the *Deerhound*, an English vessel of the royal yacht squadron.

That the wretched commander of the sunken corsair should have resorted to any dishonorable means to escape after his surrender ; that he should have thrown overboard the sword that was no longer his ; that before encountering an armed antagonist the mercenary rover should have removed the chronometers, and other plunder stolen from peaceful commerce, are not matters of surprise, for each act is characteristic of one who has been false to his country and flag. You could not have expected, however, that gentlemen, or those claiming to be gentlemen, would, on such an occasion, act in bad faith, and that, having been called upon or permitted to assist in rescuing persons or property which had been surrendered to you, they would run away with either. It is now evident that your confidence in the *Deerhound*, and the persons connected with her, was misplaced.

The Department commends your efforts to save the lives of drowning men, although they had been engaged in robbing and destroying the property of those who had never injured them. In paroling the prisoners, however, you committed a grave error.

The *Alabama* was an English-built vessel, armed and manned by Englishmen ; has never had any other than an English register ; has never sailed under any recognized national flag since she left the shores of England ; has never visited any port of North America, and her career of devastation, since she went forth from England, is one that does not entitle those of her crew who were captured to be paroled. This Department expressly disavows that act. Extreme caution must be ex-

exercised so that we in no way change the character of this English-built and English-manned, if not English-owned, vessel, or relieve those who may be implicated in sending forth this robber upon the seas from any responsibility to which they may be liable for the outrages she has committed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy.*

Captain JOHN A. WINSLOW, *U. S. N.,*

*commanding U. S. Steamer Kearsarge, Cherbourg, France.*

Some were disposed to censure the Secretary because he disapproved the paroling of the prisoners. It will be perceived, however, from the above note, that he did this merely to prevent the English Government from having any technical ground upon which they could escape responsibility for the outrages their cruiser had committed.

Here it may be proper for the writer to guard himself anew from misapprehension while stating the truth in regard to England, and putting on record once more a warning for his countrymen. The people of the United States may well lay aside all wish for mere retaliation or revenge; but it would be wrong not to demand justice at the hands of Great Britain. For the future peace and safety of the nations, she should be compelled to redress the wrongs she has committed, coolly and with hostile intent. We are told by eloquent and well-meaning gentlemen that the people of England are in sympathy with us, and indeed were during the war. Grant that this is so; unfortunately for us, the people do not govern England. The people do not decide when and where her ships shall sail, or her armies march. The people are not the England with which we have to deal. The sympathy of the people, whatever it might have been or may be now, did not save us from the active hostility of the government, the ruling classes, her capitalists, and her press. It did not prevent the fitting out and sending forth Alabamas to destroy our property by millions on the seas; and the one fact that the writer would hold before the people of the United States is, that until England herself is changed, it is idle to expect her friendship as a government. To think, as some would persuade us, that she rejoices in our prosperity, greatness, and freedom, is to believe that the England of history, the

"Old England," has passed away. Would that it were so! While she remains what she now is, power, and especially naval power, will be the most effectual peacemaker with England; and for the honor of Christian civilization it is hoped by every friend of liberty and humanity that she will never compel us to use that power in war.

Nothing could have proved more conclusively the complicity of England with the doings of that sea-robber, whose course was ended by the Kearsarge, than the manner in which she received the report of the battle, revealing the true spirit of those who controlled the policy of the country. These all sprang to the defence of the Alabama and her traitor captain, with the true instinct that it was England's flag really that had been lowered—an English ship that had been shattered and sunk by a Yankee man-of-war. The excuses, the explanations, the misrepresentations by which it was sought to cover the shame of defeat in the War of 1812, were all brought out anew and refitted for the occasion. Why this involuntary movement to defend the honor and good name of England, if they were in no way involved, and if only a steamer of a foreign power had been captured? There is but one answer to this. England, in her heart, recognized the Alabama as her ship, and England's heart spoke out in the utterances of her journals.

The pirate captain of the Alabama was transformed by the leaders of English opinion into a hero of most noble qualities, deserving only the admiration of men. The dreaded Alabama, which until then was considered an overmatch for most of the Yankee ships, was suddenly changed into a weak, worn-out hulk, unfit for action; and the Kearsarge was as suddenly magnified into a vessel of wonderful power, speed, and armament, and an iron-clad in disguise in addition to all the rest. Besides all this, she must, it is said, have had an English crew, for how else could the Englishmen on board the Alabama have been beaten? All this was perfectly natural if Englishmen thought of the Alabama as virtually an English ship, and quite unnatural if it had been otherwise. History should have a place for a few of the utterances of the British press:

The naval duel between the Alabama and the Kearsarge is not one of the least brilliant incidents in the American war. Even prejudiced

Federalists will not deny Captain Semmes credit for almost romantic gallantry in the struggle. He accepted a challenge from a far more powerful adversary; he knew his antagonist was in good repair, and better armed; and he also knew that his own vessel was in a wretched state of dilapidation.—*Liverpool Courier*, June 21, 1864.

“Romantic gallantry!” *Semmes challenged Winslow* because he thought he could capture him. When his ship was disabled and sinking he struck his flag, hoisted a white one, surrendered his ship, himself, and men, and then threw his surrendered sword into the sea, and, concealed in the bottom of a boat, ran away with the aid of his English friend! The *Morning Chronicle* said “the Alabama was terribly in want of repairs,” and the crew of the Kearsarge was greatly superior to that of the Alabama, but consoles its readers with these words: “Seven fathoms deep, and colors still flying, lies the noble vessel that for so many months was the terror of Yankee skippers.” But the English people, it is said, were with us. Witness the following:

SOUTHAMPTON, *Monday evening.*

This afternoon, Captain Semmes, on proceeding up to town, was completely besieged by crowds of people who collected around the carriage, and vociferously cheered him along the streets. A great banquet to Captain Semmes and his officers, in honor of their bravery, is already spoken of by some of our leading citizens.

The *people* vociferously cheering—great banquet in preparation by leading citizens!

He (Captain Semmes) reports that he owes his best men to the training they received on board the *Excellent*; the Kearsarge carries ten very heavy 11-inch shell-guns, the so-called columbiads of the American Navy. The Alabama, on the contrary, is stated to have had only two heavy rifled guns and six broadsiders (32-pounders).—*Daily Post*, June 21, 1864.

The Kearsarge had two instead of *ten* 11-inch guns—Dahlgrens, and not columbiads. Mr. John Lancaster, owner of the friendly *Deerhound*, comforts Captain Semmes's friends by stating that “the Kearsarge was apparently much disabled.”

The stirring romance about the glorious pennon of the Ala-

bama still floating upward as she sank, is injured slightly by the statement of Semmes, that he struck his flag before the firing ceased. The "do-or-die" sentiment is also a little strained by the fact that this hero stole away *after he had surrendered*, under a hammock-cloth in the bottom of a boat, very much as if he were not a great hero at all, but merely a mean and timid skulker. England thinks such a man a hero.

Quotations breathing this spirit could be multiplied to almost any extent from the English papers of the time—quite enough to show what the prevailing temper of the British people was; and quotations from other journals might also be given which would prove that a respectable minority were in sympathy with truth and justice and the North. It is hoped and believed that this minority has since been increased. The following extract of a letter from Captain Winslow to the *London Daily News* contains some essential facts :

The Kearsarge's battery consists of seven guns—two 11-inch Dahlgrens, four 32-pounders, one light rifled 28-pounder. The battery of the Alabama consisted of one 100-pounder, rifled; one heavy 68-pounder, rifled; six 32-pounders, that is, one more gun than the Kearsarge. In the wake of the engines on the outside the Kearsarge had stopped up and down her sheet chains. These were stopped by marline to eyebolts, which extended some twenty feet, and this was done by the hands of the Kearsarge; the whole was covered by light plank to prevent dirt collecting. It was for the purpose of protecting the engines when there was no coal in the upper part of the bunkers, as was the case when the action took place. The Alabama had her bunkers full, and was equally protected. The Kearsarge went into action with a crew of one hundred and sixty-two officers and men. The Alabama, by report of the Deerhound's officers, had one hundred and fifty.

The Kearsarge steamed to sea in order that no question of neutrality jurisdiction should be raised. When far enough she turned round and steered immediately for the Alabama for close action. The Alabama fired, as she was coming down on her, two broadsides and a part of another. No one shot came on board the Kearsarge. The Kearsarge then sheered and opened on the Alabama, trying to get nearer. The action lasted one hour and two minutes from the first to the last shot. The Kearsarge received twenty-eight shots above and below, thirteen about her hull; the best shots were abaft the mainmast, two shots which cut the chain stops, the shell of which broke the casing of wood cover-

ing; they were too high to have damaged the boilers had they penetrated. The Kearsarge was only slightly damaged, and I supposed the action for hot work had just commenced when it ended.

Such stuff as the Alabama firing when she was going down, and all such talk, is twaddle. The Alabama toward the last hoisted sail to get away, when the Kearsarge was laid across her bows, and would have raked her had she not surrendered, which she had done, and was trying to get her flags down, and showing a white flag over the stern. The officers of the Alabama on board the Kearsarge say that she was a complete slaughter-house, and was completely torn to pieces. This is all I know of the Alabama.

The relative proportions of the two vessels were as follows :

	Alabama.	Kearsarge.
Length over all.....	220 feet.	214½ feet.
Length on the water-line.....	210 "	198½ "
Beam.....	32 "	33 "
Depth.....	17 "	16 "
Horse-power, two engines of.....	800 each.	400 horse-power.
Tonnage.....	1,150	1,081

The Kearsarge was struck twenty-seven times during the action, and fired in all one hundred and seventy-three shots, fifty-five of which were from her 11-inch guns. Two shots from the Alabama struck the chain-armor, which shows the amount of protection which the chains gave. Had these penetrated, they would have done little harm, as they struck above the boilers. Of the one hundred and sixty-three officers and men on the Kearsarge, one hundred and fifty-two were native Americans, and *two* were Englishmen.

Such are the main facts connected with the sinking of the Alabama. It stung England doubtless deeply, bitterly. It mortified every friend of the rebel government in Europe and at home. Englishmen were right on one point—the Alabama was not a match for the Kearsarge. But England would not place this in its proper light, lest by avoiding one cause of mortification she should meet another still more wounding to her pride. The Alabama was regarded as what is called a "crack ship;" she was held up as a model of her class, a vaunted specimen of English skill. She was armed with boasted English guns, and trained gunners from the English practice-ship were

there to use them. In their blind confidence they thought nothing could surpass them. As in the War of 1812, the Yankees had ships of the same class, yet far superior. The Kearsarge was smaller than the Alabama, and carried one gun less, and yet she was stronger, and, considering her armament, a much more formidable vessel. The mortifying feature of the defeat was, that the American ship could tear in pieces and sink in an hour an English vessel of her own class, and that with trifling injury to herself. It was the English idea of guns and ships matched against the American idea, and the former went to the bottom. The same thing will be repeated whenever an American ship engages an English one of the same class, unless Great Britain will consent to follow American teachings. Her wooden frigates, armed as they now are, and her broadside iron-clads, would go to the bottom as the Alabama did, should they engage our frigates and our Monitors.







Daniel D. Potter  
Lieut. Col.





## CHAPTER XLI.

### FIRST ATTACK UPON FORT FISHER.—ITS SUBSEQUENT CAPTURE.

AFTER the fall of the Mobile forts, the theatre of the war presented the following general aspect. The Mississippi and its tributaries were once more open from the head of navigation to their mouths, and, except when annoyed by guerilla-bands, reviving commerce found an unobstructed passage to the sea. New Orleans was in our possession; Mobile, Savannah, and Charleston were effectually sealed against the contraband trade of England; and Wilmington alone remained a port where blockade-runners could enter and then escape with their return cargoes. Sherman was preparing for his great march to the sea, which, if successful, would of course insure the fall of Charleston, Savannah, and Mobile, without any further important efforts of the Navy. Lee was held at Richmond by Grant, and was dependent upon Wilmington for whatever foreign supplies he needed for his army. Without a continuous fresh importation from England of important articles which could not be produced at home, it was certain that the main army of the rebels could not long be kept in the field. A telegram from Lee, was afterward found at Fort Fisher, in which he informed the officer commanding there that he could not hold Richmond if Wilmington should be captured. While Sherman, therefore, was getting ready for his bold manœuvre, and Grant occupied such a position at Richmond that he could either detain Lee where he was, or follow him quickly in any direction, north or south, and the captured harbors were all closely held, it seemed more than ever necessary that the sole

remaining English naval rendezvous, Wilmington, should be speedily captured.

In September, 1864, the Navy Department received assurances from the Secretary of War that the necessary land force for the reduction of Fort Fisher and the other Wilmington forts would be supplied in due season, and preparations for the naval part of the expedition were at once begun. The Secretary was determined that nothing should be wanting on his part necessary to secure success, and a very large naval force was soon assembled at Hampton Roads. Of course, the first thought was to place that squadron under the command of the highest officer of the Navy, and Admiral Farragut was selected for this command, not only because to him, as first in rank, it belonged to direct the most formidable fleet that had ever been fitted out in our waters, but because at New Orleans, on the Mississippi, and Mobile, he had shown in an eminent degree the qualities needed for such a difficult work. But the health of Admiral Farragut had been impaired by the last two years of arduous service, in a climate which, even without severe disease, impairs the constitution, and where exposure and the constant strain upon his nervous system had partially unfitted him for laborious service. He therefore asked to be excused from this command. The request was, under the circumstances, cheerfully granted, though the whole country naturally felt regret that one so often successful in such enterprises could not lead in this.

The Department turned from Farragut to Admiral Porter, whose enterprise and daring on the Western rivers had attracted so much attention, and who certainly had given evidence of uncommon skill and energy as a commander. He was accordingly appointed to this honorable command. As usual, unforeseen causes delayed the expedition. The situation of the Army was such that the coöperating land force could not at once be supplied; and the fleet, consisting of a bombarding force of thirty-seven vessels, and a reserve squadron of nineteen ships, lay for some time at Hampton Roads impatiently waiting orders to sail.

•The season was rapidly approaching when those storms might be expected which had given a name to Cape Fear, and a great squadron would be in peril if overtaken on that coast

in an autumnal or a winter storm. Such was the anxiety of the Secretary, that he addressed the following letter to the President:

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *October 28, 1864.*

SIR: You are aware that, owing to shoal water at the mouth of the Cape Fear River, a purely naval attack cannot be undertaken against Wilmington. Had there been water enough for our broadside ships of the Hartford class, the naval attacks of New Orleans, Mobile, and Port Royal would have been repeated there. I have, as you are aware, often pressed upon the War Department the importance of capturing Wilmington, and urged upon the military authorities the necessity of undertaking a joint operation against the defences of Cape Fear River, but until recently there never seems to have been a period when the Department was in a condition to entertain the subject.

Two months ago it was arranged that an attack should be made on the 1st of October, but subsequently postponed to the 15th, and the naval force has been ready since the 15th instant, in accordance with that agreement. One hundred and fifty vessels-of-war now form the North Atlantic squadron. The command, first offered to Rear-Admiral Farragut, but declined by him, has been given to Rear-Admiral Porter. Every other squadron has been depleted and vessels detached from other duty to strengthen this expedition. The vessels are concentrated at Hampton Roads and Beaufort, where they remain—an immense force lying idle, awaiting the movements of the Army. The detention of so many vessels from blockade and cruising duty is a most serious injury to the public service; and if the expedition cannot go forward for want of troops, I desire to be notified, so that the ships may be relieved and dispersed for other service.

The importance of closing Wilmington is so well understood by you that I refrain from presenting any new arguments. I am aware of the anxiety of yourself, and of the disposition of the War Department, to render all the aid in its power. The cause of the delay is not from the want of a proper conception of the importance of the subject; but the season for naval coast operations will soon be gone. General Bragg has been sent from Richmond to Wilmington to prepare for the attack; and the autumn weather, so favorable for such an expedition, is fast passing away. The public expect this attack, and the country will be distressed if it be not made. To procrastinate much longer will be to peril its success. Of the obstacles which delay or prevent military coöperation at once I cannot judge; but the delay is becoming exceedingly embarrassing to this Department, and the importance of having the military

authorities impressed with the necessity of speedy action has prompted this communication to you.

I have the honor to be, etc.,      GIDEON WELLES.

*The President.*

At length the War Department was able to supply the needed land force, and it was placed under the command of Major-General Butler, who was accompanied by General Weitzel, an accomplished engineer, who could guide by his professional judgment and skill the attack upon the forts. It was thought at first that the object of the expedition could be concealed from the rebels, and the rendezvous was therefore appointed at Beaufort, as if Charleston were the destination of the fleet. But the long delay enabled the enemy to understand the plan, and additional troops were ordered within supporting distance of the forts. Fort Fisher is situated on a neck of land between the ocean and Cape Fear River, called Federal Point. The plan of attack was to land the troops some distance above the fort and intrench across the point to Cape Fear River, so as to prevent reinforcements being sent from Wilmington, and then to attack by land and water. Fort Fisher and its connected batteries mounted about seventy-five guns, while the armament of all the works erected for guarding the approaches to Wilmington was about one hundred and sixty guns, many of them of the largest calibre then used in forts. Among them were some 150-pounder Armstrong guns. Admiral Porter, who was at Sevastopol during the siege, says in an official report, "that Fort Fisher was much stronger than the famous Malakoff."

One feature of this attack was a novel one. It was thought by some that a ship with a large quantity of powder on board could be brought so near to Fort Fisher, that an explosion would not only level the walls but perhaps also blow up the magazine. A steamer was procured, disguised as a blockade-runner, filled with powder, and taken so near the fort that its destruction was by many deemed probable. All were disappointed. From some cause the explosion produced no important result, and the fort stood uninjured and defiant.

Preparations were at once made for bringing the fleet into position, and it was decided to make the attack on the 24th of





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Drawn by M. E. Woolsey, U.S.N.

*The double turret Monitor.*  
"MIANTONOMOH"

The Monitor & Miantonomoh, May 8, 1862, at Fort Mifflin, N.Y.





Painted by M. B. Woolsey, U.S.N.

*The double turret Monitor.*  
"MIANTONOMOH"

The Monitor & Shipper, Esq. May 18th. Co. T. B. Broadway, N.Y.



December, although General Butler had not yet arrived with his troops. The attacking squadron carried some five hundred guns. It is not supposed that this estimate is exactly correct, for the armaments of our ships were so frequently changed that the precise number of guns taken into an action can be determined only by returns made at the time. Some of the largest guns in our Navy, or in the world, were on board these vessels. The Monitors, of which there were three, mounted 15-inch guns; the battery of the New Ironsides was composed of 11-inch Dahlgrens and many 11-inch guns, and 100-pounder and 150-pounder Parrott rifles were on the smaller vessels, while the heavy frigates Minnesota, Wabash, and Colorado, mounted each forty 9-inch guns. No such formidable armament as this had ever before been arrayed against a fort, and probably no fort on the continent was better prepared to resist even such an attack. It was not a mass of masonry that these enormous guns might batter down and crumble into rubbish; but its outer wall was an immense earth-bank, in which shot and shell might harmlessly bury themselves, while the guns were placed at a considerable distance from each other, so that very heavy traverses of earth were built between them, thus placing each piece in a small separate fort, surrounded on three sides by very thick banks of earth. It was far more difficult therefore to reduce a work so extended, than if the guns had been mounted in a smaller space, while the fire of the fort would thus be even more effective against the ships.

But extended and formidable as these various earthworks were, they were over-matched by the terrible batteries of the fleet. Nothing human could long endure the continuous smiting of the ponderous shot and crashing shells, from those five hundred guns. Earth-banks, guns, and men, alike went down before them. At daylight on the 24th of December, the ships got under way, and stood in, in the long line of battle. The black, grim-looking Ironsides very properly led the way, followed by four Monitors, one of which—the Monadnock—afterward steamed round to San Francisco, to contradict, by one grand fact, whole volumes of deceitful arguments. The Ironsides and the Monitors took position about three-fourths of a mile from the fort, opening fire as they came into place; and

then the great frigates came on, and the heavy sloops, and after the smaller vessels, all firing to cover themselves while anchoring; and soon along the whole extended line there blazed one almost continuous sheet of flame, and the rolling thunder of the broadsides and the defiant answering roar from the guns of the forts made land and water shudder, and the stroke of shot, and the scream of the shells, and the crash of their bursting, were heard above the booming of the artillery.

Clouds of dust went up from the fort as the crest of the parapet was dashed away, or when shells buried themselves in the earth, and then exploded, gun-carriages were struck and overturned; and in one hour and a quarter the gunners of the batteries were driven to cover, and the fort was silenced, not returning a shot to the fire of the ships. Two magazines were blown up, and the fort was set on fire in several places. At sunset General Butler with a few transports came in, the rest not having arrived from Beaufort. In this action six of the 100-pounder Parrott rifles burst, killing and wounding more men than the guns of the enemy, and shaking rudely the confidence of the public in these guns which, on other occasions, had done such excellent service. The ships sustained very little damage. The extent of the injury which the fort received could not then be known; that it was temporarily silenced all could see. The Monitors lay near the fort; and the men, feeling themselves nearly secure, fired with perfect coolness, and the immense shells smashed earth-banks and guns together; but the broadsides of the ships drove the rebels from their guns.

On the 25th of December all the transports had arrived, and it was agreed that an attack by the Army and Navy should be made that day. The troops were to land five miles to the eastward, and seventeen gunboats were sent to cover them. Early in the morning the ships again took position, and began to fire slowly, merely to engage the attention of the garrison while the troops were going ashore. General Weitzel approached within about six hundred yards of the fort, and observed its condition—one officer mounted the parapet, and brought off a rebel flag, one soldier went into the fort, and led out a horse, and another fired his masket into a bomb-proof. After this reconnoissance, and having landed about three thousand men, General Weitzel

reported that a successful assault was impracticable, and the troops were ordered to reëmbark. This order was received with much surprise, and even indignation, by the officers and men of the fleet. They were confident that the fort could easily be taken, and were unwilling entirely to abandon an enterprise which had been so well begun. But there was no present remedy. They could neither command the troops, nor capture the fort alone.

It is not the province of the historian to decide the questions which were raised in the exciting discussions which followed this affair. The officers of the Navy were decided in the opinion that the fort might have been carried by an energetic attack, while General Weitzel, a distinguished engineer officer, reported after a reconnoissance, that the fort for defensive purposes was substantially uninjured. The commentary upon both these opinions was, that a few days after it was taken by assault. The fact that it was captured in that manner, and after so short an interval, seems to afford strong presumptive evidence that it might have been carried in the first instance, and yet it is not absolutely conclusive. The experience of the war has clearly shown how earthworks, and even forts with walls of masonry like Sumter, may be torn and levelled, and yet leave them formidable defensive works, when the guns are not dismounted, or when, as at Sumter, they could quickly be remounted behind the breastwork of fallen rubbish. The garrison of Wagner could at any time be driven to their bomb-proofs by the fire of the iron-clads, and the parapet of the work crushed into an irregular sand-heap, and still that battery could be taken only by regular siege approaches. No one can say with certainty whether this would or would not have been the case at Fort Fisher, still the opinion of experienced engineers is not to be set aside as entitled to no weight. It detracts nothing from the fame of the Navy to admit that the work was still strong at the close of the day's bombardment. The ships had done all that even their tremendous batteries could accomplish: the earth-walls were shattered and torn up, the garrison driven to cover, and imprisoned in the bomb-proofs, and they could have been held there until an assaulting force should reach the line of fire from the vessels; and then the question arises whether



the garrison would not be found ready to repel the attack. It does not appear how many guns were disabled in this first attack. In an official chart showing the condition of the work after its capture, every gun on the northeast face, fourteen in all, is marked dismounted or disabled. It must not be forgotten, however, that the officers of this fleet were not novices in war, nor were they without long experience in this kind of warfare. Admiral Porter had fought nearly every fort on the Mississippi and its tributaries, from below New Orleans upward; and many of his officers had participated in more than one such battle, and their decided opinions in regard to the condition of the fort, and the probable result of a land attack, should have great weight with all. The works were doubtless seriously injured, for the fire of the fleet was accurate and overwhelming, and the defensive power of the batteries must have been greatly impaired. Some naval officers who had been long on the bar, and had observed the works as they were built, thought it rash to attack the fort with wooden ships, expecting that many of the vessels would be sunk. The result was widely different from their anticipations: the enemy's guns were silenced in a little more than an hour, with no loss except from the bursting of our own guns. This is shown by the following extract from Admiral Porter's official letter, under date of December 27, 1864: "We silenced the guns in one hour's time, and had not one man killed, that I have heard of, except by the bursting of our own guns, in the entire fleet." Such was his confidence that Fort Fisher could be taken, that he most earnestly urged the Secretary to obtain and send forward another body of troops.

On the 29th of December, the Secretary of the Navy, after consultation with the President, sent a telegram to General Grant, stating his belief that the fort could be taken by a suitable land force, to coöperate with the Navy, and asking for the necessary troops. General Grant, convinced that the works could be carried by a spirited attack, at once engaged to send forward a competent force to the assistance of Admiral Porter. Accordingly, about eight thousand men were placed under the command of General Terry, and these reached Fort Fisher early in January. In the interval between the first and second attack, the fleet was exposed to the violent gales which prevail

on that coast, and the enemy had strong hopes that the fleet would be dispersed and the expedition abandoned. But Admiral Porter was not easily discouraged at obstacles nor dismayed at dangers. He believed that, with proper effort, Fort Fisher could be taken, and he was determined that such an effort should be made. The vessels rode out the gales safely; even the Monitors, against which so many unfavorable predictions had been made, found no difficulty in weathering the storm, and were at hand, in good fighting order, when again fair weather came on.

On the 13th of January, the weather was such as to permit the landing of the troops. The iron-clad division, consisting of the New Ironsides, commanded by Commodore William Radford; the Monitors Saugus, Commander E. R. Calhoun; Canonicus, Lieutenant G. E. Belknap; Mahopac, Lieutenant A. W. Weaver; and the Monadnock, Commander E. G. Parrott, were ordered to take a position nearer the fort than in the first attack, the outside vessel, the New Ironsides, being about one thousand yards distant, and some of the Monitors about seven hundred yards. At the same time, the other vessels took positions farther from the batteries. The fire of the four Monitors was so rapid and accurate, at that short range, and so far kept the rebels from their guns, that little damage was done to the fleet while getting into position, and when all were in place, the bombardment from the whole line was very rapid and severe. During this attack, the troops were being landed, and by 3 p. m. eight thousand men, with their intrenching-tools and provisions for twelve days, had been safely put on shore.

The fire from the whole squadron was kept up with steady severity until 4 p. m., when the wooden vessels were withdrawn. It was seen that some of the guns were dismounted, and long before the action ceased, the fire from the fort was discontinued and the men kept closer within the bomb-proofs. The iron-clads were kept in position, and continued their fire during the night. Porter intended, as he said, to have no guns to oppose the army when the assault should be made.

The next day, the 14th, the iron-clads, and all the gun-boats mounting 11-inch guns, renewed the attack, the Monitors having, through the night and morning, been firing slowly.

At 1 P. M., all began to fire from the heavy guns, with the intention of dismounting or disabling the artillery of the fort. This fire was continued till long after nightfall. The fire of the iron-clads was directed for the three days against the land face of the fort, where the assault by the troops was to be made; and although they were nearly concealed by the high traverse walls, which made an angle with the line of fire, it was seen that many guns were struck and disabled, but the full extent of the damage was not known till after the surrender. Then it was found that every gun on that face of the fort had been disabled, not wholly, but mainly, as was thought, by the heavy shot and shell from the iron-clads, lying as they did so near the fort, and having obtained the exact range, and firing with a consciousness of security and with deliberate aim.

On the evening of the 14th of January, arrangements were made with General Terry for the final assault. The troops were rested, after their sea-voyage and long confinement on shipboard, and had also recovered from the drenching they received in landing, and were ready for the fight. The fort had two sides, the land face, fronting the northeast, and the sea face, fronting the southeast. The northeastern face was the one upon which the iron-clads had concentrated their fire, and where many of the guns were already disabled. This was to be assaulted by the land forces under General Terry. The other front had been under the fire of the wooden ships. They were obliged to fire at greater distances than the iron-clads, and their guns were also lighter, though some 11-inch cannon were mounted on these ships. From the greater distance, their fire was less effective, and this side of the rebel fortification was not so seriously injured. This face it was decided to assault with a body of sixteen hundred sailors and four hundred marines, from the fleet.

It was arranged that all the vessels should take position as early as possible in the morning, and fire rapidly during the day, the hour for the assault being fixed at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The fort was constructed so as to form what might be called immense casemates, if they had been roofed in. They were spaces about sixty feet long and fifty feet wide, with thick earth-walls on both sides, about twenty feet high. They were open in the rear, and in front there was an open space wide

enough for the gun. Of these there were seventeen on the northeast face of the fort, occupying a space of about one-third of a mile in length. The other face, which was assaulted by the sailors and marines, was about one mile in length, terminating on the right flank in a mound fifty-two feet nine inches high, on which were mounted one 10-inch columbiad and one 150-pounder rifle. It will be seen that each of these *open casemates*—if such a term is not a misnomer—was a separate fort, with a gun or two and garrison of its own, and that, in an assault, each would have to be separately taken.

On the morning of the 15th, the ships went once more to their positions, and opened their fire at about 11 A. M., the soldiers and sailors having made their arrangements for the attack. They first threw up a protecting breastwork, and then, by a series of rifle-pits, worked their way onward until about two hundred yards from the fort, and there awaited the order to assault.

From 11 o'clock in the morning until 3 P. M. a fire was kept up from all the ships, as rapid as possible—a fire which was now more effective, because the ranges were known. It told with great effect upon the fort, and its heavy embankments crumbled into shapeless masses under the strokes of the shot and the explosion of the shells, and guns were disabled or buried in the sand; still those twenty-three hundred brave men within the shattered works were sheltered by the bomb-proofs, and ready to spring forth to repel the assault, when the firing from the fleet should cease.

At 3 o'clock the signal came that all was ready for the assault. The steam-whistles were blown, and the fire of the ships was changed to the upper batteries, while the soldiers, on one side, and the sailors on the other, dashed forward with a shout. The sailors rushed gallantly on till they reached the stockade, when they were met by a most destructive fire from the parapets, that now swarmed with rebel soldiers. The marines, who were left at the rifle-pits in order to keep down such a fire from the fort, failed to do what was expected, and the murderous volleys mowed the sailors down.

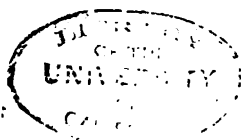
Finding themselves unsupported by the marines, the assaulting party first halted, then were thrown into some confusion, and

finally they broke and hurried back to the beach. The attempt, though a failure, was not entirely useless. The rebels, mistaking this for the main attack, massed themselves upon that side of the works, paying less attention for a moment to the approach of the soldiers; and just as they were cheering at the repulse of the sailors, they received a volley from the soldiers, who had entered from the opposite direction. Then commenced a very fierce and novel combat, in some respects the most remarkable of the war. More than two thousand determined men defended these traverses, and they were to be captured one by one. At the first rush two of them had been secured—and then came the final extraordinary battle. The Ironsides and such other ships as lay in the proper position were ordered to fire through the traverses, in advance of our troops, changing the direction, as one after another they were carried.

For more than five hours this terrible hand-to-hand death-struggle went on in the traverses; shouts and yells, and shrieks and groans, and musket-shots and clash of bayonets, marking the centre of the fight, while just before the slowly advancing tide of battle the thundering broadsides of the ships sent storms of shot and shell through the traverses, while the ground over which reinforcements might come was swept every moment by grape and canister. Thus for five hours, from the extreme point toward the right, the battle rolled slowly on, traverse after traverse was gained, till at 10 o'clock at night the rebels were chased out of the last one at the Mound battery. Then they broke and ran in confusion to the end of Federal Point, where, hemmed in by the water and our troops, they surrendered at discretion, and thus the almost impregnable Fort Fisher was won. Cheers went up from the fort, and cheers answered back from the ships; all the steam-whistles were blown in triumph, and rockets shot up on all sides in token of victory. All was bravely done. The fort was stubbornly defended and gallantly won. There was perfect accord between the Army and Navy; each sustained the other; and Porter's energy, courage, and skill on the water was matched by Terry and his soldiers on the land. Both were sustained by as noble a set of officers as the country could boast, and it was evident to all when the works were captured that all the resources at their command were ne-

cessary to secure the victory. The assaulting column of sailors lost very heavily, and several most valuable officers were sacrificed there, men whom the country could ill spare. One of those mysterious panics that will sometimes seize a body even of brave men, spread through the ranks of the sailors, and they could not be rallied. Their officers did all that men could do, but in vain. Yet these same sailors were individually brave men, and had marched steadily up to the stockade under a heavy fire.

Seventy-five heavy guns, many of them superb rifled pieces, were captured here, and nineteen hundred prisoners. Very soon after, the other forts defending Wilmington came into our possession. The last important rendezvous for English smugglers was broken up, and the entrances to Cape Fear River and Wilmington were perfectly closed; and thus the last great naval expedition of the war was gloriously ended. It was a noble triumph in all its features: for Porter, overcoming all obstacles and bringing victory out of apparent defeat—for Terry, showing what enterprise and determination could do for the Government, in rendering it certain that Lee must ere long abandon Richmond, now that Sherman and Grant could both be supported from Wilmington, while at the same time the rebels were cut off from supplies.



## CHAPTER XLII.

### CONCLUSION.

THE capture of Fort Fisher was the last of those brilliant operations by which, during the rebellion, the American Navy won a world-wide reputation. Much important service was performed after this before the war was ended, particularly at Charleston and Savannah, which deserves more particular mention than the limits of this work would allow; and the author regrets that the assistance which the Navy rendered the army of Sherman, after it reached the sea, cannot be adequately presented. For the same reason it was necessary to omit a particular description of the capture of the Florida, which involved some important questions of international law, and of the Georgia, the last of the rebel cruisers.

For many of the lesser operations of the year 1865 it has been impossible to find adequate space. With an earnest desire to do the Navy, its officers and men, full justice, it will doubtless be found that some things have been omitted that should have been mentioned, and it is hoped that some opportunity may yet offer for making such corrections and additions as are needed to perfect the work.

It is believed that the great features of the policy of the Department are clearly and justly presented, and that the book will enable both our own country and Europe to form a correct opinion of what the American Navy actually performed during the rebellion, and to determine the rank which we shall hold in the future among the great naval powers of the world.

THE END.

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"Generals Sherman, Sheridan, Ord, and Wilson, and the officers of General Grant's staff, as well as Admiral Porter, have afforded me much valuable information, and given me all the assistance in their power, that I have desired. The Honorable Edwin M. Stanton has also furnished me with information which I could not otherwise have obtained.

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"My opinions, however, have not been submitted to General Grant. For them I alone am responsible. But, those opinions are based exclusively on the facts presented to the reader, and, unless supported by the evidence I offer, must fall to the ground.

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